An Autobiography

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1

Early Childhood

I was born in the Malayalam year 1069 (corresponding to A.D. 1894) under the sign of Taurus, and my birth-star was *Uttara Phalguni*.[1] Our family home is known as Chalayil, and it is in Kavalam village of Ambalapuzha *taluk* in Kerala. I was born there. Although I was the third child, only one elder survived.

Kavalam has been totally by-passed by history, but it has some slight literary associations. The author of the Kathakali drama, *Santhana Gopalam*,[2] belongs to Kavalam. His family unfortunately is now extinct. Kavalam in my childhood was a trellis of dykes set in the middle of paddy-fields. In that region of water-logged paddy-fields, the dominant element was water and not land. Today, many of the shallower fields have been planted with coconut trees, so that the Kavalam landscape is not what it used to be.

A finger of the River Pamba, flowing through Kavalam, contributed to its fertility. Every homestead was surrounded and often criss-crossed by canals, which served irrigation and navigation alike, so that one could not pass from house to house without either mounting a rustic bridge or wading a canal.

The Chalayil family had some standing in our locality and provided the traditional village teacher down the generations. Actually our family still retains this office in four other small villages. Our roots however go back to the village of Valadi in the adjacent Changanacherry *taluk* where our original home stood and where we still retain our family deity. It was my grandmother who in the Malayalam year 1007 (A. D. 1832) set up house at Chalayil. The property was being mismanaged by other members of our family at that time, so that my grandmother and sixteen-year-old brother were sent to Chalayil to set

things right. For many years thereafter, although the new branch was established at Chalayil, the women used to go back to Valadi for their confinements. My mother was the first to break this tradition.

My grand-uncle, Eravi Kesava Panikkar, was an uncommon individual. My earliest memories relate to him. His voice was loud and he had a retinue of servants. When he strode into the Chalayil house, striking terror into the lesser fry, my grandmother used to tremble and withdraw into the inner court. The house, which until that moment had resounded with many activities, would drop into instant silence.

Grand-uncle lived in an extension of the house within hailing distance of the family. He used to breakfast there, but came daily to the main Chalayil house for his dinner, which started punctually at 5 p.m. and lasted an hour. During his dinner, many people used to stand outside to discuss farm and local affairs with him. Before dinner, grand-uncle was in the habit of taking opium. He would first have his ritual bath and then one of his attendants would hand him a tiny pellet of opium, which he would swallow with some water, and then go on munching roasted grain.

It is difficult for people today to imagine the dread which grand-uncle inspired in the rest of the family. Nephews who were suspected of insubordination ran the risk of losing food and habitation. Once he refused maintenance funds to the older branch of the family for a time as punishment for some breach of his instructions. The story ran that one junior guilty of drunken and dissolute behaviour was locked up in the coconut store for one week and fed once a day.

My mother had three brothers. The eldest was the head of the family after grand-uncle and was held in high esteem in Travancore. He was Eravi Ramakrishna Panikkar. During my boyhood, this elder uncle was generally occupied with our paddy cultivation and rarely at home. My second uncle, Ayyappa Panikkar, was younger than mother and he used to keep the family accounts. Our youngest uncle was studying in college at the time.

My father belonged to Kasaragod *taluk* in the north, but since their family were the managers of the Pallarakavu Temple in Kavalam, my father lived there. He was a devout and conscientious man, greatly attached to his children.

My formal education started at the age of five. It was a tradition that some member of our family should teach the village boys, irrespective of caste, the rudiments of Malayalam. In my time this was done by one Kunjunni Panikkar. But although I was taught the alphabet in my fourth year, I was not allowed to go to his village school for another year. My grandmother used to teach me writing and spelling at home.

My grandmother practically brought me up until I was old enough for school. She was the children's favourite, and by nature gentle, affectionate, fond of children and a devout Hindu. By contrast, my mother, who ran the household, was of an imperious disposition and even grandmother was a little awed by her. I was even more so.

The village classroom was in a neighbouring compound. Nairs, Christians, Ezhavas, used to get free schooling there—all told nearly fifty children, including girls. The curriculum embraced writing on sand, reading whole sentences, learning the story of Sri Krishna and arithmetic. The first thing I learned was to write on a palm-leaf with a stylus. We had to transcribe *Sri Krishna Charitam*[3] stanza by stanza on palm-leaf and learn each by rote. In the first year, I managed to complete two cantos and learned to write on palm-leaf.

When I was six, my grandmother realized that the village school was inadequate. Since there was no English school nearby, and since I had to learn some arithmetic and also how to write on paper, she asked my second uncle to teach me both. This was the only one of my uncles who was resident at home. Although somewhat quick-tempered, he was very intelligent and a man of courage and integrity. His room was above the portico of our big granary and accordingly the portico became my work-place. After assigning sums and handwriting exercises to me, uncle used to go about his work. When he found that I was playing truant one day, he tied me to a

pillar and left me with paper and books, before going out. As soon as uncle disappeared, grandmother came and set me free, but tied me up again before uncle returned for lunch! This went on for a week, but one day uncle happened to return early and found me swimming in the pool. After he learned the truth, he stopped tying me up.

At that time I was much less interested in writing or arithmetic than in reading the *tullals*[4] (satirical poems) of Nambiar. During that one year of uncle's tutelage, I managed to read almost all the *tullals* of Kunjan Nambiar and even learnt three of them by heart!

Every evening, when dusk fell, my mother used to sit down and read either the *Ramayana* or the *Bhagavatam* aloud for nearly an hour. Women and children used to sit around the lamp and listen. Such was my introduction to the *Puranas*. I learned the *Mahabharata* also at that time. By the time I was ready for my English school, I had already developed an interest in Malayalam literature.

My youngest uncle, Govinda Panikkar, was then reading for his B.A. degree in Trivandrum. My elder brother was in a high school there and living with our uncle. It was decided by my grand-uncle that I should also go there for an English education. In those days a journey to Trivandrum was as much an event as a trip abroad today. Although my grandmother was unwilling to send me so far away at this tender age, she could hardly challenge grand-uncle's decision.

I still remember that journey. In later years, I have travelled the world by road, sea and air. But no other journey has ever equalled that first one in wonder and excitement. Although there was a steamboat running from Alleppey to Quilon, we made the trip in our own covered country-boat, fully equipped with cooking facilities, bedding and all the rest. To me the world was new. Starting from Kavalam in the morning, we reached Ambalapuzha at noon. Of course, I had read about Ambalapuzha in the *tullal* poems, and through them had already tasted the *palpayasam*[5] for which

the temple there was famous. And so it was doubly exciting to go down there, bathe and visit the famous temple. In this way Sri Krishna of Ambalapuzha was perhaps my patron at the beginning of life's journey.

We left Ambalapuzha at two in the afternoon and made slow progress. It was nightfall when we reached the landing-place at Trikunnapuzha. The boat was tied up and our servants made haste to prepare dinner. Immediately after dinner, we were to embark and sleep in our boat, which would sail all night and bring us to Ponmana by daybreak. The government choultry there served as a morning halt. After breakfast, we resumed our journey to Quilon across the troubled waters of Ashtamudi Lake. Keeping close to the bank, we took time to reach Quilon. After lunching there, we again took to the boat. When we reached the Varkala tunnel, I was asleep. Hearing water drop on the boat's awning, I woke up, thinking it had started to rain. When my brother told me that we were going through a tunnel bored through a mountain and that what I heard was the splash of water, I wouldn't believe him at first. We reached Trivandrum by noon the next day.

Throughout my stay at Trivandrum, our journeys continued to be solely by country-boat. On the outward trips we would use our boats and on the return, use hired boats. Such leisurely travel, disembarking where one wished, stopping for meals and the like would be incredible today. Even in those days, steamboats did the trip from Alleppey to Trivandrum in one day, while our country-boats took three or four. But we never found the delay irksome. In later days, I have more than once longed to recapture old memories by undertaking a similar journey, but unfortunately I have not found the time yet.

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School-days

Our first residence in Trivandrum was a small house in Thampanoor, in a lane to the east of the District Court. Our landlady was a school-teacher and lived next door. My uncle, brother and I had two servants from Kavalam to run our house.

Before enrolling me in the school attached to Maharajah's College, my uncle spent two weeks at home teaching me the English alphabet. The teacher of the first class was a gentleman called Karimpuvilakam Raman Pillai who rose to prominence in later life. Although a disciplinarian he was friendly with his pupils and he is the only one I now remember of my school-masters at Trivandrum. He was my first teacher of English and my respect and regard for him continued unchanged all my life.

Although my uncle was fond of me, he did not spare the rod as a matter of principle and, accordingly, his affection for me was usually demonstrated through his cane. It is difficult to [illegible] how many times I was caned daily, for no apparent reason. After six months, I acquired a companion, a boy named Kesava Panikkar from Valadi. However, uncle used [illegible] rarely on Kesavan and even if we were playing [illegible] he used to single me out for punishment. We were not allowed to leave the house. Talking to other boys in [illegible] was a grave offence. Once school was over, my [illegible] and I had to return home, and stay there. Whatever [illegible], few days passed without my dose of the [illegible] my elder brother, soon to matriculate, enjoyed [illegible] freedom than I.

[illegible] be dogmatic about the extent of freedom to be [illegible] children. True, modern psychology commends

freedom in play and extra-curricular activities as essential to development and condemns corporal punishment. But this is not the whole story. My own view is that children do benefit from punishment if it comes from people who really love them.

Heaven is supposed to lie about us in our infancy according to the Romantic school of English poetry. But this isn't true. I doubt if there is a more distressing stage of life. The trifles over which children grieve! Jealousy, rivalry and greed are the plague of childhood. If one boy gets a sweet, we too must have ours or we weep and throw a tantrum. If mother shows special attention to one child, the others sulk. In one child gets a new toy, the others insist on having one too. To the adult the resultant strains from these emotions may seem trivial, but to the child they assume tragic dimensions. In fact, many common human failings are seen in the raw in early life. It is only by judicious punishment, training and by proper mental development that we succeed in eradicating them.

That I did not lack affection and indulgence the previous chapter will show. True enough, grandmother was always alert to save me from the wrath of others. But after my arrival in Trivandrum, the ill effects of all the affection and indulgence soon disappeared, thanks no doubt to the series of canings conscientiously dealt out by uncle.

My uncle had many friends in Trivandrum. One of his daily visitors was Vaikom Narayana Pillai, who used to be fond of me. On many occasions he saved me from the cane. I have another reason to remember him with gratitude. He was a devotee of Malayalam literature and I first heard *Mayura Sandesam*[1] and *Sakuntalam*[2] read aloud by him.

Another frequent caller, though not a close friend, was P. Govinda Pillai, well-known in those days as the editor of *Subhashini*. Swadesabhimani Ramakrishna Pillai caricatured him in doggerel for his moustache, his bulk and his constant spitting. My acquaintance with Govinda Pillai was slight, but my first encounter with him is perhaps of some interest. Although I was only nine at the time, I used to challenge uncle's visitors to recitation competitions in Malayalam. One day,

when Govinda Pillai called, uncle was not at home and as usual I invited him to join a follow-on recitation. He agreed.

The rule of this competition is that the respondent recites a stanza whose first syllable corresponds with the concluding one of the stanza recited by his rival. Because I knew *Sri Krishna Charitam* by heart, I was able to fend off Govinda Pillai for a while, but soon I was cornered. I had to find a stanza beginning with 'ch'. Hard as I tried, I could not recall anything beginning with 'ch'. I decided to change the first word of the stanza in *Mayura Sandesam* from *utramalpam*[3] to *chitrakare.*[4] Govinda Pillai of course spotted the emendation but chivalrously reported to uncle that I had held my own.

Vaikom Narayana Pillai had a brother, Pachu Pillai, staying with him. As Pachu Pillai was a great friend of my brother, he would often visit us. At the time, he was preoccupied with current Indian politics and used to regale us with news about prominent figures like Surendranath Banerji, Pherozeshah Mehta and Gokhale. I could never have enough of these and used to pester him to tell me more. No doubt my interest in politics was aroused early in life thanks to Pachu Pillai.

My uncle was then madly enthusiastic about chess and later was equally drawn to bridge, to which he was introduced by a friend, Kalluveettil Nanu Pillai. There was an unspoken understanding that I could watch uncle play chess. This was my initiation to the game. The mysteries of bridge, on the other hand, were revealed to me by Nanu Pillai's exposition of the game to my uncle.

I was fortunate in another way at Trivandrum. During my first year, uncle had as his Malayalam text Cherusseri's *Krishna Gatha*[5] and *Sakuntalam.* Similarly, another year my brother had to learn *Akbar*[6] and the Kathakali play, *Nala Charitam.*[7] I was thus directed to good books. As a result, among my early reading were P. Govinda Pillai's *History of Malayalam Literature*,[8] Kunjikuttan Thampuran's Malayalam translation of Kalidasa's *Vikramorvasiyam*, P. G. Rama Iyer's version of *Sakuntalam* and *Mayura Sandesam.*

My performance in school at Trivandrum was quite

undistinguished. Thanks to my brother's supervision, I was fairly regular with my homework. I remember coming up with the highest marks in the lessons featuring Travancore history and O.M. Cherian's *Stories from Indian History.*

At Trivandrum, I continued only up to the Third Form (Class 5). When my uncle had completed his law course, the Trivandrum establishment became superfluous. My brother, too, had done his F.A. examination and was to move on to Madras for his M.B.C.M. I was therefore transferred to Thalavadi High School. Kottayam and Alleppey were nearer home and boasted of reputed schools. Hence my transition to Thalavadi may sound curious. The explanation was that my uncle was entrusted with the management of the school run there by local initiative. The school was built out of collections raised by the local Nairs led by Poonuthara Nilakanta Panikkar of our family. Accordingly, on Nilakanta Panikkar's death when the school was in difficulties, my uncle was requested to take up its management.

Soon after my departure for Trivandrum, my grand-uncle, Eravi Kesava Panikkar, died and family affairs passed into the care of my uncle, Eravi Ramakrishna Panikkar. He was a leading figure among the Nairs of Travancore by virtue of his outstanding abilities, public spirit and his loyalty to the community. He was a handsome and impressive personality, universally respected and, although there were others in the family older in years, everyone accepted the advice of the late head of the family, and selected him to manage the family's affairs.

When my uncle took up the management of the family's affairs, he had to give up his own agricultural activities. When the younger people, like my brother and me, left home for an English education, there was no one to take his place, so the paddy-fields were farmed out to lessees. It was in such circumstances that my uncle was pressed to take up the management of Thalavadi High School.

Although it was obvious that the school would make demands on his own financial resources, uncle, with his

usual concern for public good, agreed to take up the burden and deputed his younger brother Govinda Panikkar to live at Thalavadi and look after the day-to-day management. This was how I went to the family school in Thalavadi after my Third Form in Trivandrum.

It so happened that although I sat for the Third Form examination at Trivandrum, I failed, albeit unluckily—having absent-mindedly pocketed my mathematics answer paper and brought it home! Ill-luck or not, there was no alternative to a second year in the Third Form of the school at Thalavadi.

Thalavadi school was a unique institution, with no parallel before or after. Cracked walls on insecure foundations, undivided classrooms crowded into one vast hall, a total lack of recreation space, was the picture that met the eye. In monsoon time, the school yard would be covered with water, and during floods water would invade the classrooms themselves. Inexperienced teachers, indifferent pupils and a chaotic teaching system completed the picture.

I do not assert that no pupil of the school got on in the world. In fact, I know at least two of its matriculates who rose to success. One was Srimati Kotoor Bhagirathi Amma who took her M. A., and eventually became Professor of English at Indraprastha Women's College, Delhi. The other was N. K. Narayana Pillai, for a long time a leading lawyer at the Alleppey Bar. I can't think of anyone else.

The Headmaster in my school days was a brahmin from Ambalapuzha, Krishna Iyer of Mitramadom. My own class was presided over by Kannan Nair, a patriot of outstanding ability and courage. He was not originally a teacher but a government servant who had to leave the service because of an argument with an Englishman, after which he ran a magazine, *Nair*, for a time. This ended in his becoming a teacher. His nephew, K. Madhavan Nair, who made a name as a Congress leader in later life, also worked in this school for a while.

Our Malayalam *munshi* at the time was a teacher named

Kesava Pillai, hailing from Tiruvalla. He and his colleague and brother, Krishna Menon, were both lovers of literature. Krishna Menon, who taught mathematics told me a great deal about Malayalam literature. He taught me the whole of *Syamala Dandakam*[9] which I still cherish. When uncle went to Madras to sit for his B.A. examination, Krishna Menon was our guardian *pro tem*. He was a gentleman and scholar and I am grateful to him for interesting me in Malayalam and English literature.

I only remember one of my schoolfellows, and that is K. Kunchu Pillai, who later joined the Travancore State Congress and achieved political pre-eminence but died young.

Luckily for me, perhaps, the Director of Education, Dr Mitchell, ruled the Thalavadi School to be unsafe for its purpose. This was its death-blow. Dr Mitchell served notice that unless it was rebuilt, recognition would be withdrawn. The local residents being unable to raise the money for a new building, the school had to be closed down. My uncle therefore decided to send me to C.M.S. College School at Kottayam to continue my Fifth Form classes.

The same year my brother left for England to pursue his medical studies. A far cry from our country-boat excursion to Trivandrum, typifying the winds of change sweeping Kerala.

At Kottayam, I lived in the Hindu Hostel attached to C.M.S. College, the Warden of which was Ambalapuzha Mahadeva Sarma, the Malayalam *munshi* of the college. He was at one time in the service of Kerala Varma (the senior Prince), and this connection as well as his considerable interest in Malayalam literature led to his appointment. Although he had no academic qualifications or any claim to scholarship, his extraordinary love for Malayalam won our respect. Mahadeva Sarma prided himself on his occasional poems published in *Kavana Kaumudi*, on his translation of a short novel entitled *The Dewan's Daughter* and an original work of his, *Srimad Sankaracharya*.

My own acquaintance with Mahadeva Sarma was only in

his capacity as Warden of the hostel. There could rarely have been a more incompetent Warden. The rice was full of sand, and what passed for curry was *sui generis*. No meals were ever served on time. Apart from this, my life in the hostel was not uncomfortable. Sarma was always eager to introduce us to Malayalam literary works. There were in the hostel two young men with literary tastes, N.K. Padmanabha Pillai and P. Narayana Pillai. Along with them, I entered Sarma's literary circle. Sarma was a collector of old, rare books and I was able to read many good books from his collection. These included the works of Kundoor like *Komappan*,[10] poems like *Usha Kalyanam*[11] and *Chandrotsavam*.[12]

It must be admitted that my first venture into poetry was a parody of Sarma. Although I had tried to write poetry earlier, it was Sarma's encouragement that spurred me into Malayalam writing. I confess that my first shaft was directed at my mentor. He had recently published a short poem, *Gosalak-koottan*,[13] in *Kavana Kaumudi* and forced me to read it twice. In resentment, I attempted a parody under the title *Agrasalak-koottan*[14] and deposited it on Sarma's table. I do not remember a line of this now, but remember that Sarma was greatly offended and did not speak to me for a day or two.

Sarma blundered badly at the time. Wanting to enter the arena of literary criticism, he prepared a lengthy and laboured paper on *Chandrotsavam*, ascribing its authorship to Melpatur Narayana Bhattathiri. Although this was mistaken, the paper had many incidental merits. Sarma was anxious to get P.K. Narayana Pillai to preside over his lecture. Narayana Pillai was practising at the Kottayam Bar in those days. I went with Sarma to invite him. Our insistence overcame his initial reluctance and Sarma was gratified by his eventual consent to preside.

The lecture was held in the Y.M.C.A. Hall. A large audience assembled, attracted perhaps by Narayana Pillai's reputation as a speaker. Sarma was jubilant. Narayana Pillai listened to part of the paper approvingly, but when Sarma blundered into some derogatory references to the

'air community, suggesting that *Chandrotsavam* was a reflection ' the Nair society of its time, Pillai's mood changed. His . ' ' . ' l address was a matchless performance, a master- ' . of argument, refutation, irony and eloquence, lasting . nearly one hour. He characterized the paper as silly, ' . ' and ignorant and refuted every argument with a ' . er's skill. When Pillai concluded by asserting that men of limited scholarship should not venture into serious criticism, the audience endorsed him by its applause. It was a picture of a sledge-hammer crushing a fly.

I left the Hall in Sarma's company. The poor man was in tears. He could hardly speak and we returned to the Hostel in almost complete silence.

A friend of my Kottayam days was Paruthikattu Gopala Pillai, my senior by one year in class, but a close friend from the beginning. He was also fond of literature, so we used to read together and exchange poems. Gopala Pillai refers to this in the Foreword to his book, *Padmini*.[15]

I spent only two years at Kottayam and sat for my Matriculation examination there. I failed, not due to slackness, but only because I failed to grasp what was taught in our science classes. In the Physics paper, I could not answer even a single question correctly. The debacle was painful. Immediately schools re-opened, I tried to get admission again at Trivandrum. For some reason, this attempt did not succeed either. I had dreadful premonitions of failure in life and fell ill. In a mood of despair, I even got hold of a bottle of chloroform with a view to ending my life. In the height of fever, I was taken home to Kavalam, where I gradually recovered but lost one year of schooling. While thus suffering enforced idleness, I was mortified to hear comments from the family to the effect that I was obviously unfit for further education. My mother was extremely distressed. While I was not particularly keen on further education, the humiliation was more than I could bear. One day I took a liberal dose of chloroform and went to bed. When I opened my eyes after many hours,

grandmother was dabbing my face with cold water, amidst weeping and commotion in the house.

It was generally agreed that I need not continue in school and I concurred. My eldest uncle suggested that if all his nephews went in for English education and outside careers, there would be no one left to run the family's affairs. My second uncle had different ideas, but he bided his time.

However, I was not destined to a life of poetry and domestication. My elder brother, studying medicine in England, wrote to my eldest uncle that I should be sent to Madras for further schooling. Since this suggestion was supported by my second uncle too, I was able to go.

I passed the Matriculation examination from St Paul's School in Vepery, Madras. However, I never thought of going to England for university education. I had no fancy for higher studies at all, and only my brother's insistence persuaded me to go to Madras. My brother now wrote to my eldest uncle that there was no point in my doing my B.A. in Madras and it was better to send me on to England at once. Having decided to continue my education, uncle agreed that this would be the best arrangement. Accordingly, my brother applied to get me admitted to Christ Church, Oxford. Since the academic year had already begun, I spent the remaining months in Madras Christian College, joining the Intermediate Class.

With Oxford six months away, I took little pains over my work. My attention was devoted again to Malayalam. Nandyelath Padmanabha Menon and Poothezhath Rama Menon were studying in Christian College at the time, and the former, though a B.A. student, showed some interest in me. During my Christian College days I used to write weekly articles for the paper *Deepika* published from Mannanam. It was in these that I first propounded the thesis that Dravidian metres were better suited to Malayalam poetry than the classical Sanskrit ones. I cited the examples of Cherussery, Ezhuthachan and Nambiar to prove that Malayalam poets enjoyed greater imaginative freedom in the indigenous metres.

My view was challenged by one or two persons in the same paper, but the matter attracted no notice then and the controversy erupted only after three years, when I raised the subject again in the *Bhasha Vilasam* magazine.

I had also some non-Malayali friends in Madras. These included Sadasiva Reddy and G.V. Krupanidhi. Both were brilliant scholars, always achieving first class ranking in every examination. Reddy came from a prominent landed family in Anantapur. On my return from Oxford I persuaded his family to send him there and in due course Reddy came to head the Education Department of Madras State. Krupanidhi went on to become Editor of *Swarajya* and Joint Editor of *The Hindustan Times* and was also a prominent Congressman. Both still remain chief among my friends. C. K. Vijayaraghavan and the late P. Balakrishna Menon were other friends of that period. It was then that I met Shanmukham Chetty.

I left for England in April 1914. Although term would open only in October, the six months spent with my brother would help me to know the country. My brother had more or less completed his own course and was due to return home soon. I was anxious to spend a few months with him before that.

3

Oxford

I arrived in London in May 1914. I had sent a telegram from Marseilles to my brother in Edinburgh but it failed to reach him in time and so he was not able to meet me. The hour was late and I felt lost. Eventually I decided to continue my journey to Edinburgh and boarded the night train which, leaving at 8 p.m., reached Edinburgh by five in the morning. The next problem was to locate my brother. The only address I had was that of the Indian Students' Association and accordingly I took a cab there. Long before normal rising time, I woke up the people there and was given his correct address, to which I repaired with all my baggage. Even then my quest was not over, because only a fortnight earlier, my brother had, in anticipation of my arrival, moved to Marchmont Crescent. However, the last lap was no problem.

Before entering college at Oxford, I had to get through an entrance test held in May. After ten days in Edinburgh, I had therefore to go to Oxford. The examinations were not very formidable and I passed them. Although I spent only four days in Oxford on that trip, they proved to be the most momentous in my life. They also showed how seemingly trivial incidents can alter a man's life.

In the lodgings where I stayed, there was a Sindhi student, Asudamul Gidwani, who achieved fame in later life as a disciple of Gandhi and as an apostle of non-co-operation, being then known as Acharya Gidwani. Gidwani had come to Oxford with a first class M. A. from Bombay University two years earlier. My extreme youth must have excited his sympathy. After two days' acquaintance he took me to B. K. Mallick's digs to enable me to meet some prominent Indian students. I did meet some six or seven people there, including the well-

known scholar B. K. Sirkar who was then on a tour of Europe. Although they were all very kind to me their conversation went much above my head because it was all about modern literature. For the first time I heard names like Ibsen, Bernard Shaw, Chesterton and Francis Thompson. Soon the discussions shifted to Benedetto Croce and Bergson. I was flabbergasted and not a little nettled by my own inadequacy. I returned in disgrace with myself and spent a sleepless night wondering how an ignoramus like me could live among such learned people.

On returning to Edinburgh two days later, I spoke to my brother about my discomfiture. After six years of medical studies and a total absorption with diseases and drugs, he was not particularly impressed by my tale of woe. Nevertheless he permitted me to buy any books I needed. Taking advantage of this I got hold of works by Ibsen, Shaw and Chesterton the same day. During the next three months I devoted more time to these than to my forthcoming responsions due at Oxford in September. This period saw my initiation to modern English literature.

When I returned to Oxford in September, I was ready to take on anyone on the subject of Bernard Shaw. Soon I made a friend, an English youth named Dickinson, who knew many Indians. He was a talented poet and writer, contact with whom helped improve my knowledge of English literature.

Our term opened in October. I lived in rooms at Christ Church occupied a century earlier by Gladstone himself. Unaccustomed to living in European conditions, I had some difficulty in adjusting myself to life in college, but with the help and advice of my tutor, Rawlinson (later Bishop of Chichester), I was soon able to manage.

When I went up to Oxford, there were some sixty Indian students in residence. The premier university of the Empire naturally drew the cream of Indian scholarship representing the best in intelligence, attainments and breeding. We looked up to H. S. Suhrawardy and B. K. Mallick as the chief of them.

In addition there were John Mathai, Dewan Chamanlal, Subbaroyan, Hasanand Datija, S. N. Sastri, P. T. Rajan and others who were to become distinguished in later life.

On all counts, Suhrawardy was an extraordinary individual. He was our leader. The son of a High Court judge of Calcutta, he had lived in Europe from boyhood and had mastered several languages, including French, German, Italian and Spanish. His mastery of English astonished even men of letters like Robert Bridges and Sir Walter Raleigh. He had no trace of communal feeling. It was due to his deeply rooted patriotism that Oxford earned a name as the training ground of Indian patriots. Until his appointment in 1917 to the English Chair in a Russian university, he was a mentor to most of us. His younger brother, Hassan Suhrawardy, who achieved notoriety as Chief Minister of Bengal and a Muslim League leader, was also at Oxford at this time.

B. K. Mallick was an entirely different type. He was already not less than thirty years in age. After holding down a high position in the service of Maharajah Chandra Shumsher of Nepal, he had come up to Oxford with a government scholarship. His idea was to work for a degree by writing a thesis about his observations in the West. But as his own views went on changing from year to year, this great work never saw the light of day. He was intelligent, industrious and modest, but lacked clarity of thought. Even clear waters became muddied under his gaze. Although we did not think much of him as a model for students, in all other respects we regarded him as head of the family. He was always ready to help with advice or money. One could say that Mallick's room was a salon of learning. Most Indian students of the time in Oxford had cut their intellectual teeth at its sessions.

Hasanand Datija was another Sindhi. A First Class M.A. of Bombay, he was studying for the I.C.S. He was not selected but his erudition in history and politics commanded universal respect. Different again was Dewan Chamanlal. He stood out in any company by his intelligence, alertness and wit. The son of a Punjabi millionaire, Dewan Daulat

Rai, he was perhaps a little spoilt by success. Subbaroyan, a zamindar from Salem, was liked by everybody, for he was amiable, studious and proficient in cricket.

At the time there were four Malayalis in Oxford, V.K.Raman Menon, V. Krishnan Tampi, Dr John Mathai and myself. Although Raman Menon had finished his studies by the time I went up to Oxford, the outbreak of war found him in Germany where he was interned for two years. Even when he returned to Oxford, he could get no transport to India and had to spend the war years there. He was the son of the ruling Maharajah of Cochin, popular for his modesty and friendliness.

V. Krishnan Tampi was the brother-in-law of Sri Mulam Tirunal Maharajah and came up to study Sanskrit at Oxford. His only failing was laziness. I never met a keener devotee of idleness than Tampi in those days. He would work when so inclined, but for the rest he preferred the company of friends. But he was remarkably intelligent and entirely free from jealousy or malice.

John Mathai had practised law in India and after taking a doctorate from London University came to Oxford to do research on the co-operative movement. Distinguished even then, Mathai's qualities need no encomium from me. As a moderate in politics, his views were not palatable to students who proclaimed their radicalism from the house-tops. The theory that co-operation would solve India's woes was ascribed to Mathai by Menon and lampooned in a humorous verse.

The Oxford Majlis was in existence at the time. It was founded by the late Maulana Mohammed Ali. Until our time, it was not very prominent in university life. It was Suhrawardy who raised it to prominence in the eyes of Indians and Britons alike. During Majlis meetings on Sunday nights, no one had the temerity to argue for anything less than complete independence for India. The Majlis was considered a den of treason by the India Office while we claimed it was the true voice of nationalism. It was our practice to invite prominent people to lecture on Indian affairs. Nor did our speakers hesitate to speak out. The first guest speaker I heard at

Oxford was Lala Lajpat Rai who at the time was suspected of being a moderate. At the invitation of the Majlis he spoke on 'India Today'. In the subsequent discussion from the floor he was subjected to indescribable abuse and Rai left the hall in high dudgeon.

The Majlis has been addressed by Indian leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Tagore, Sarojini Naidu and Jinnah and eminent Britons like Colonel Wedgwood and Robert Bridges.

Just seven of us founded another Society which was of absorbing interest to me. Once a week we used to meet and read aloud *avant-garde* plays from the Continent. Each member had to read the part of one character. Plays chosen under this programme included Hauptmann's *Hanneles Himmelfahrt*, Maeterlinck's *Monna Vanna* and Ibsen's *A Doll's House.*

It was at Oxford that I started writing for the press, spurred by growing nationalist feelings. My first article in English was a piece on the freedom movement in Hungary and I sent it to *The Indian Review* of Madras edited by G. A. Natesan. When Natesan published it and invited me to write more, I was not a little gratified. Subsequently, I used to write also for *The Modern Review*, *The Hindustan Review* and *Commonweal.*

I was keenly pursuing my literary efforts in Malayalam also. My first poems appeared in the magazine *Kavana Kaumudi* published from Kottakkal by P. V. Krishna Warrier. I was helped by advice from Warrier who was always anxious to encourage young writers. I was drawn to Vallathol's poetry after seeing his piece, entitled 'A Letter', in this magazine. I asked Warrier to send me other works of the poet. The books came from Vallathol himself and this inaugurated a correspondence between us.

Kavana Kaumudi published an annual number with the title 'Bhasha Vilasam'. Warrier invited me to write an essay for the Annual and this was the controversial essay 'Malayalam Poetry and Sanskrit Metres'. I sought to canvass the same thesis that I had broached earlier in my *Deepika* article while at Madras.

I had no difficulty in showing that Dravidian metres were more suited to Malayalam poetry, and that poets like Cherussery, Kannassan, Ezhuthachan and Nambiar composed their best work in Dravidian metres. Today this is a truism, but it was a different story in 1915. The senior Prince Kerala Varma had only died recently. He had been a dazzling performer in the mixed *manipravala*[1] style and it was natural that he should be partial to Sanskrit metres. His influence was still paramount and leading poets like Vallathol, Ulloor, Pandalam Kerala Varma and Kumaran Asan had not yet tried Dravidian metres. In fact, it was almost axiomatic that poetry could be poetry only if composed in the classical Sanskrit rhythms. When an unknown student sought to challenge this axiom, eyebrows were raised, but there was no immediate approval. Even Vallathol did not concur. However, I requested him to write at least a short piece in an indigenous metre and he obliged by writing 'A Picture'. The transformation in Malayalam prosody that followed is a matter of history.

Another incident occurred at the time which was to affect my life in many ways. A man named T. K. Swaminathan published a magazine, *Colonial Review*, from Madras and I used to write for it. He announced an essay competition on the subject of 'Indians Living Overseas'. The essays were to be evaluated by C. P. Ramaswami Iyer and the winner was to get a prize. I entered the competition and won the prize. The essay was published in 1917 under the title *The Problems of Greater India*[2] with an Introduction by C.P. Ramaswami Iyer.

It is a strange fact that this essay, adjudged fit for a prize by C.P. Ramaswami Iyer and published with a commendatory foreword by him was to advance my career in many ways. I never imagined then that his life and mine would intersect at many points. On his part, the famous leader of the Swarajya Party could not even have heard of a student like me except in connection with this book. Yet fate decreed that this book, published out of the prize money by T. K. Swaminathan, was to alter the course of my life.

The book was reviewed at length by Admiral Sir Roland Wilson in *The Asiatic Review*. When I went to the office of that journal to get a copy, I chanced to meet its Editor, Dr John Pollan, Secretary of the East India Association. He complimented me on my book and pressed me to read a paper before the East India Association on the subject of Indian Education. The Association had never before invited a student to read a paper. Before an audience of celebrities and men of note, I read the paper which was the subject of a leading article in *The Times Educational Supplement*. This brought me into contact with Ramalinga Reddi and Masood and eventually led to my appointment at Aligarh.

Meanwhile my studies progressed at Oxford. My professors were kind to me and commended my work. The Dean of Christ Church, Dr Strong, currently Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, showed a parental affection for me. This remarkable man, who later became the King's Chaplain and Bishop of Oxford, showed the same regard for me all his life. Similarly, my tutor, Arthur Hassall, the distinguished historian, had special regard for me. My college had never awarded a scholarship to an Indian before and when I was chosen for the Dixon Research scholarship in 1917, it was felt to be a notable distinction.

My final Schools were in June. Although Indian students had been in Oxford for over thirty years, no one except Kuruvilla Zachariah had so far won a first. Even brilliant men like Suhrawardy and Datija had only secured second classes. I worked hard to get a first but dared not hope for it. However, when the results were announced, I was one of the four to achieve the first class.

The day the lists were published, the Dean and Vice-Chancellor, Dr Strong, sent me the following letter:

Christ Church
6 July 1917

My dear Panikkar,

I am so very pleased to have been called upon just now to attach my signature to the History Class List with your name

heading the list. You have worked so well and covered so much ground that I had high hopes, but I know how hard it must be to do papers in a strange language. I think you are one of the first Indians to appear in the first class in History and I am sincerely glad that you have achieved this distinction as a Christ Church man; but I am also extremely happy at the success of a friend. I congratulate you with all my heart and I hope this success is the beginning of a successful career.

Yours sincerely,
Thomas B. Strong

My tutor Hassall wrote: 'In my long career as tutor of history at Christ Church, I have never had a more brilliant student', but I took this merely as a formal compliment.

I stayed on at Oxford for another year. This was to read anthropology and to do some research in the field of Indian history. When reading European history, I had often been mortified by my limited knowledge of the history of my own country. This was the time when the famous historian Vincent Smith was writing his *History of India* at Oxford. He invited me to assist him and I was thus able to study certain phases of Indian history under his guidance. I was also able to pass my examination in anthropology with distinction.

It was at this time that I had the opportunity to meet two outstanding personalities. Of them the first was the Sinhalese leader, Sir Baron Jayatilake. Jayatilake was the president of the Ceylon Congress and came to London to present a popular memorandum against certain British excesses in Ceylon. Afterwards, this eminent scholar decided to stay on in Oxford to do some research in Buddhist philosophy.

Jayatilake was the Gokhale of Ceylon. A man of even temper and high principles, wise and learned, he was a model person. He was responsible for the renaissance of Buddhism in Ceylon and was the first person to start a non-Christian College to enable Buddhist children to get their education in a Buddhist atmosphere. He became Ceylon's first Prime Minister.

My association with Jayatilake helped to develop my mind

and to broaden my interest. Once he advised me to write a book on the nationalist movement and offered to help. This resulted in my *Indian Nationalism, Its Principles and Its History*.[3] Before I went down from Oxford I delivered the MS to Jayatilake and it was he who arranged for its publication.

Dr T. M. Nair was a very different type. There never was a manlier Malayali. A leonine face, a long curving moustache, massive chest, a somewhat portly figure and powerful arms made up his impressive physical presence. His intellect and powers of expression were equally uncommon. One had only to talk to him for a couple of minutes to fall under his spell. In the most eminent company, he achieved effortless primacy. I have never seen an Indian to equal him as a conversationalist. Although T. M. Nair achieved fame as a skilled physician, his astonishing intellect could master any subject with equal ease. As leader of the Madras Corporation he was ready to discuss engineering with engineers and law with lawyers. In civic administration, he had no peer in South India. As an editor and orator, he was matchless.

Above all, he was eminently sociable. He was a connoisseur of food and drink, with unerring taste for wine, tobacco and good cuisine. A *bon vivant*, Nair was always open-handed with his money. In spite of this cosmopolitanism, Dr Nair never ceased to be a Malayali and I have often heard him quote Nambiar and Ezhuthachan in conversation. People remember him today as the founder and leader of the non-Brahmin movement. Although the force of the movement has now waned, T. M. Nair will not be forgotten by Madras.

Nair had come to London to lobby against the Montague-Chelmsford reforms. Although I had no sympathy for his views, I was eager to meet such an eminent personality. I was introduced to him by Sir Frank Brown, an assistant editor of *The Times*. We were close friends for about three or four months and I used to meet Dr Nair almost daily in the period just before my return to India. He returned to India a month after I did, but ironically we were not able to meet in India.

In September 1918, I decided to go down from Oxford, after spending four of the most important years of my life there. However we look at it, the University remains supreme. The world's finest youth seek its portals. From America, Japan, China, Russia, France, in fact from every country in the world, young people gravitate to Oxford. To live in such company is itself an education. Only Paris University has tolerated an equal freedom of opinion. All views are aired. Life in college is a kind of *gurukula*[4] living. Tutors and professors treat pupils like friends, while the college authorities are always active to help in moulding the character of students and advancing their careers.

I need hardly say how hard it was to give up all this and leave Oxford. I wrote a poem about my feelings which appears in the collection *Apakva Phalam*.[5] It is an inadequate reflection of what I felt. It is certain that my debt to Oxford will grow rather than diminish with the passage of time.

4

Aligarh

The war had not ended and it was difficult to get a passage home. At last I was able to embark on 11 September 1918 on the *S. S. Tasman* from London. Dr T. M. Nair advised me to wait for a month or two when the war would have ended, but I was in a hurry to get home and set off in disregard of all friendly advice. The voyage through the submarine-infested Atlantic was risky. I was not without some qualms, but decided to take the risk. While the discomforts of wartime travel were inevitable, the constant threat of enemy action was an intolerable burden. On 17 September, at 4 p.m. our ship was hit by a German torpedo and it foundered. Out of 273 people in it only 52 escaped. I have given an account of this harrowing experience in the paper, *Kairali*.

After this narrow escape, I found myself back in England. But undeterred by it, I set out again on the same journey. The new ship did not escape German attentions either, but their repeated attacks did not succeed and I was eventually able to reach home.

The four years I spent in England had seen numerous changes overtake my home and homeland. My dear grandmother had passed away a year after my departure. Her goodness and generosity are still recalled by our people. Although the bereavement had occurred while I was abroad, my homecoming served to reawaken the grief.

During these four years, matriarchy had more or less declined in Travancore. After the Nair Regulation enacted by Dewan Rajagopalachari, most of the Nair families in our neighbourhood had disintegrated. Thanks to my uncle's competence, our family avoided internal disputes. Nevertheless, partition

was imminent. The Nair Service Society and the radicals were pressing for division of joint families, and for the Nair community vast changes were round the corner.

In the wake of the war, famine gripped the country. Never before had Kerala suffered such privation. An authentic picture of the people's sufferings can be drawn from Vallathol's poem 'Nothing to Eat, Nothing to Wear'. In the dislocations of the Second World War, we are apt to forget those of the first. But to the unfortunate sufferers, it was an ordeal indeed.

Soon after my return, my marriage became a settled fact. My brother had married the daughter of our eldest uncle. My mother and uncles wished me to marry the eldest daughter of our second uncle, Eravi Ayyappa Panikkar. Both of us had known of this plan from our childhood. The girl herself had lived in the family house from the age of ten. My grandmother and mother were specially attached to her. Since both of us were agreeable and the whole family keen, the marriage ceremony was soon performed without much fuss.

Some modern thinkers are of the view that marriages between near relations are harmful. This view has no scientific basis, nor does experience lend it support. Take our case. My wife's mother was the daughter of our grand-uncle. My wife was the daughter of my own uncle. In spite of such consanguinity, no harm has resulted from our marriage so far. Providentially perhaps, our children do not appear any the worse for it, physically or mentally.

I was not unaware that living abroad or in other parts of India with a wife lacking in English education would present difficulties. Until our marriage, my wife had never gone out of Kavalam; she knew nothing of the world outside the Chalayil house. But I soon realized that women learn the art of housekeeping as birds take to the air and fishes to water. I have never had a second thought about this problem since.

Immediately after marriage we went to Pallavaram in Madras, where my brother was the head of the Military Hospital. It was in December 1918 that I arrived there. Now that my education was over, I had to decide what work I would do.

Shortly before my return from England, my brother's friend, C. Ramalinga Reddi, then Director of Education in Mysore had asked my brother about me and suggested that he should be informed of my return. Reddi was very influential in the educational world. I promptly went to Bangalore to meet him. Reddi told me that all the European professors of Aligarh College had resigned and the authorities had decided to appoint in their stead Indians with high academic qualifications from European universities. He had already arranged with a friend, Masood, to include me among them. I knew that Aligarh College was a leading private educational institution in India. The selection of a Hindu as professor in a Muslim college was unusual enough to be gratifying. When I expressed my interest in the Aligarh appointment, Reddi gave me a letter to Syed Ross Masood (the grandson of Sir Syed Ahmed), Director of Education in Hyderabad, who was a powerful figure in the College administration. I went to Hyderabad and met Masood. Masood promptly wrote to the college secretary, Nawab Mohammed Ali, to finalize the terms of my appointment.

It may not be inappropriate to say something here about this fine man, who became famous in later life as Nawab Sir Ross Masood. From the day we met to the day of his death, he was like a brother to me. I never had any friend who showed me so much affection. His great-grandfather was a Foreign Minister to the Moguls. His grandfather, Sir Syed Ahmed, was not only a leading Muslim but an all-India leader of the front rank. His father was the eminent jurist, Justice Mahmood.

Masood was a giant, six feet three inches tall and broad in proportion, weighing 290 lbs. His appearance was as impressive as his figure and his intellect equal to both. But for his early death at the age of forty-six, there is no doubt that he would also have become a leader of his community. Educated at Oxford and Paris universities, Masood was an author and critic in Urdu.

I returned from Hyderabad to Madras in the company of

Masood and Akbar Hydari. Masood insisted on my spending at least two days with them and accordingly all three of us stayed with the then Chief Justice of Madras, Sir Abdur Rahim. The Southborough Committee was then in Madras working on delimitation under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. Surendranath Banerji, who was a member of the Committee, was also a guest in Abdur Rahim's house. I need not say that I was all eagerness to meet Banerji, once the undisputed leader of India.

In appearance, however, he was unimpressive. Short and lean, a man of plain features and a lined face, he was altogeher an unprepossessing figure. I was amazed that this man could have fired Bengal with his eloquence and shaken the legendary Lord Curzon himself. Only the gleam in his eyes gave a hint of the extraordinary spirit within this common frame. Even at the age of seventy, he rose at 4 a.m. and took a two-mile walk before breakfast at dawn. For his capacity for work without respite, I can think only of Mahatma Gandhi to match him. We got on well and I spent three or four days with him. He used to tell me of the nationalist movement. Even on this short acquaintance I could appreciate his qualities and patriotic feelings, and revere him for them. But I was disturbed by one thing. Banerji was firmly convinced that all officials and all other Indian politicians were conspiring to persecute him. He used to cite many trivial incidents in support of this complex. Although I was surprised when I heard these, I soon realized that he was the victim of an obsession.

Towards the end of March 1919 I went to Aligarh to take up my appointment. There may be people who enjoy the work of a college professor, but I am not one of them. I held the post for three years. In 1921, when the college was converted into the Muslim University, the authorities made me head of the department of history. They had confidence in me and were satisfied with my performance. My fellow-professors were friendly. The college secretary, Nawab Mohammed Ali, treated me as a member of his family. It was I, an 'infidel',

who signed as witness at the marriage of his son, Azad. The Raja of Mahmudabad, the first Vice-Chancellor, was also very considerate to me. I was also invited by Allahabad and Benares universities to serve as an examiner. Although I was thus able to achieve a fair measure of success in my career as a professor from the very beginning I never found the work congenial. I was always intersted in politics, and my main problem was how to enter politics.

Life at Aligarh was pleasant in every way. The company of scholars and cultivated people, a not too arduous job, three months vacation every year, contact with leading political figures, good emoluments—surely these are enough to make anyone happy.

I had plenty of leisure for pursuing personal interests. It was then that I started to study Malayalam literature systematically. Because of my acquaintance with Vallathol, Nalapat and Asan, I was *au fait* with current trends in that literature. But I wanted to study its development in perspective and started reading the work of Kannassan, the *chambu*[1] poetry and Kathakali plays with some care. It was when I heard Barrister K. P. Padmanabha Pillai recite some stanzas from *Lila Tilakam*[2] that I was seized with the desire to understand the traditions of Malayalam literature. I started with that very work. When I studied the verses quoted in it, I realized that even at the time *Lila Tilakam* was written, Malayalam literature had reached a highly developed stage. From that starting point, I planned an independent course of reading through the *chambu* poetry, the various *prabandhas*[3] and Kathakali plays, down to modern literature. During my residence in Aligarh, I had the opportunity of carrying out my plan.

Not that I had given up original writing. The fad for 'realism' is common to young people and I was not an exception. My concern with realism produced the novel *Dorassini*.[4] I do not think it has any merit except as the first Malayalam venture in realism. I remember that A. Balakrishna Pillai, the champion of modernism in Malayalam

literature, compared it with the work of Maupassant in a detailed review. Other works written at Aligarh include a prose play, *Noor Jahan*,[5] poems like *Gandhari at Kurukshetra*[6] and the songs collected in *Prema Geeti*.[7]

I also wrote some books in English. Of these, *Essays in Educational Reconstruction*[8] set out to review educational methods in India and to propagate new ideals. It was welcomed by scholars. Perhaps out of a desire not to let my post of Professor of History remain titular, I also attempted a book on *Harsha Vardhana*[9] at that time. It is now a more or less standard work of history. It has been translated into Malayalam. My concern with politics expressed itself in the book *Imperialism*.[10] After reading it, the Raja of Mahmudabad wrote to me, 'I do not think you will waste much time hereafter in a Professor's job!' He was right.

It was in 1920 that Mahatma Gandhi advised the boycott of educational institutions as a part of his non-co-operation movement. Since the Ali brothers, campaigning for *Khilafat*,[11] had joined hands with Gandhiji, this agitation had an impact on our college. Gandhiji, the Ali brothers, Abdul Kalam Azad and others visited Aligarh. Because most of the students were keen on following them, the college was actually closed for a month. Mohammed Ali founded a new institution to cater to the boys who left our college—the now celebrated Jamia Milia.

My first meeting with Gandhiji was during this Aligarh visit of his. Although he exhorted me to join the non-co-operation movement, I felt it would be unseemly to desert the college in its time of trouble. My friendship with Masood had become very close by the time. Since I had been appointed on his initiative, I felt that my resignation now would be a breach of faith. I explained this to Mohammed Ali, whom I knew as an old Oxford man. It was only when he conceded the propriety of my stand that I escaped from the horns of this Gandhian dilemma.

I worked for another year at Aligarh. I was also actively concerned in its transformation from a college to a university.

Although the wave of political unrest led to some restraints on freedom of opinion within the university, I was not myself seriously affected because of my happy relationship with the Vice-Chancellor, the Raja of Mahmudabad. However, when the vacations started in June 1922, I resigned and left for Madras.

Let me end this chapter with an incident of special interst to Kerala. While at Aligarh I used to spend my long vacations regularly in Kavalam. During the 1920 vacation, I invited Vallathol, Nalapat and Kundoor to spend a few days at the Chalayil house. Before his return, Vallathol wanted to see Kathakali performed in the local style. My uncle arranged for a performance by prominent players like Mathoor Kunju Pillai Panikkar, Thakazhi Ayyappan Pillai and Kunjan Panikkar. The now celebrated Kerala Kalamandalam owed its conception to this performance. My brother was its treasurer for a long time. Mathoor Panikkar was a retainee of my uncle. I knew him from childhood. Vallathol was astounded by his performance in the role of the black Nala in *Nala Charitam* and as Dharmaputra in *Krimmeera Vadham*.[12] Vallathol observed that he had not even imagined that such a genius lived in our day and feared that his talent might die with him. It was to preserve this remarkable school of Kathakali that the Kalamandalam was established.

5

Madras

To resign was easy, but it was not easy to decide on what to do next. My post at Aligarh was permanent and well-paid. To forego its status, the company of scholars and the peaceful life it afforded and jump into politics seemed ill considered to many. My brother and uncles did not approve of my plans but they said nothing to me. But the Raja of Mahmudabad and senior friends like Dr Krishnan Pandalai spoke out plainly. To ask why I rejected their advice and exchanged a life of comfort for the perpetual storms of politics is a fair question. The main cause was my temperament. I was never enamoured of security; I was even inclined to scoff at those who preferred the sheltered life to the adventurous. For myself I preferred the rough seas to the haven and my experiences at Oxford confirmed my choice. It was the tameness of academic life that bored me. I never bothered about the consequences of rejecting it until after my resignation.

A few months earlier, T. Prakasam and other prominent men in Madras had founded the English daily paper, *Swarajya*. My friend and contemporary, Krupanidhi, was its manager. When I came to Madras from Aligarh, Prakasam pressed me to join him as editor. With my long-standing love of journalism, I was quick to agree.

When I imparted this news to the Raja of Mahmudabad he wrote:

> I was very sorry though I was not surprised to receive your letter. Your decision to take up editorship of a nationalist newspaper seems to me, in the case of a young man of your promise, to be a step of danger. You know the position of newspapers in India, especially of nationalist newspapers. Apart from the

very considerable political and financial handicaps there is no stability in the profession and I shall be sorry to think that you may find after a few years that you have exchanged an honourable career in which you might have achieved great distinction for one in which your talents may not find ample scope.

I was aware that his observations on the profession of journalism were correct. The life of an editor in the India of those years was not only difficult but very uncertain. The hostility of people in power, the needless wrangles, the lack of alternative employment, financial strain, were all endemic to a life of journalism. I had to undergo all these trials, and knew in advance what was in store for me. That I should knowingly have chosen this troubled life may seem surprising. Yet in spite of its hardships, to one interested in public affairs, there is no more congenial occupation. The doyen of editors, the internationally acclaimed former editor of *The Times*, my friend Wickham Steed, describes the fascination of the Press thus:

> From the first I conceived it as something larger than the getting and the publication of news—I looked for and found in it a means of working out and applying a philosophy of life, a chance to help things forward on the road I thought right.

To my mind, journalism was a means of participating in great causes and helping them forward. Even after I left journalism for other occupations, I did not sever my links with the Press. My contacts with newspapers in India and abroad, including the *The Times*, *Manchester Guardian* and *Foreign Affairs* still remain those of a journalist.

In Madras, the Justice Party was then in power. With that party under the chief ministership of the Raja of Panagal, I was engaged in a perpetual struggle. My policy was to seek the support of non-Brahmins of nationalist views to weaken the Panagal ministry. Almost every day I waged my battle with Panagal with the help of men like Ramalinga Reddi, Natesa Mudaliar and Ramalingam Chetty. There is no need here to recount the success of our policy.

Lord Willingdon, later Viceroy, was then Governor of Madras. Shortly before his term expired, I had occasion to launch a vigorous attack on his administration. Following this, I published several letters of the Governor to indicate that there was some dubious deal between him and a local jeweller. The Directors of my newspaper were alarmed. They were afraid that an attack on the Governor might precipitate disaster. Anyway, I resigned the editorship the following day. This was in February 1924.

Madras politics were not very inspiring at the time. The Tamil Nadu Congress was embroiled in the rivalry between S. Srinivasa Aiyangar and C. Rajagopalachari. Srinivasa Aiyangar had resigned the Advocate-Generalship to enter the Congress, and assumed that leadership was his prerogative. Acute in intelligence and rich as he was, Srinivasa Aiyangar's main weakness was his egotism. It seemed as if he was out to demolish everyone who did not concede his undisputed leadership in southern India. Nor did he spare any expense to serve his purpose. It was said that he wished to be known as the Gandhi of Madras. He was in the habit of speaking, but not of listening. In spite of these weaknesses, he was widely respected for his patriotism, his fiery radicalism and his munificence.

Chakravarti Rajagopalachari was the opposite. He acquired a modest reputation as a lawyer in Salem and thereby entered politics. His skill in camouflaging his ambitions, his apparent modesty, his penetrating intelligence, his learning and industry were the main elements of Rajagopalachari's personality. Even then people did suspect his apparent lack of ambition and his seeming modesty. He was a supreme dialectician and no one could win an argument with him. He was untouched by love of money, but it occurred to many that he liked to exercise authority. Lean, desiccated, poor in health and unmindful of creature comforts, Rajagopalachari looked like a Jesuit priest, but possessed an extraordinary strength of mind and determination.

The rivalry between these two figures may be said to have

poisoned the Congress in Madras. Within the city, Aiyangar was stronger; outside it, Rajagopalachari. The Tamil Nadu Committee was controlled by Rajagopalachari. The remaining leaders also took sides. Prakasam was with Aiyangar. Although Satyamurti sided by turns with both, he joined with A. Rangaswami Aiyangar, editor of *Swadesamitran*, in seeking to reduce the authority of both. My own activities were outside these groups. Let the leaders run the Congress Party affairs. My own job would be to attack the Raja of Panagal and the Governor and to bring matters of importance to public notice. I happened to learn that Christian missionaries had spirited away a Hindu woman for conversion and my first attempt was to mount a minor agitation against this. Following this I embarked on a series of exposés in the paper, such as on the frauds practised on the Imperial Bank, the excesses of certain landowners in Malabar and the like. This policy helped to make the *Swarajya* popular.

It was during my stay in Madras that I got to know Tagore and Sarojini Naidu intimately. Tagore had come to Madras on his way to Travancore which he was visiting for the first time. Since I knew Tagore's associate C. F. Andrews, I was invited to Tagore's residence and we became friendly. I had occasion to work with him several times until his death. I was flattered when in a letter to me he wrote: 'You are one of the few people whose articles I should like to have for the *Viswabharati*.'

I had met Sarojini Naidu in England. She came to Madras in 1922 on her way to Palghat where she was to preside over a Conference. I was invited to preside over the literary gathering arranged in conjunction with it and so we travelled to Palghat together. Since her sister Mrinalini was a good friend of mine, we became almost like members of a family. Sarojini's qualities defy description. President of the Indian National Congress, a permanent member of its Working Committee, an internationally acclaimed poet, the arbiter in all matters cultural in India—all told, she held a unique position in the country. Not only in India. Even in England and other

advanced countries, her reputation was secure. For some reason, Sarojini's *shashtiabdapurti*[1] could not be celebrated in her home town of Hyderabad. Seven years later, a twelve-day long festival was held there under the auspices of the Nizam himself. In a letter she wrote to me at that time, she said:

> I deeply appreciate your affection and your genuine friendship for me through many years of change. Well to believe that one of the unchanging things in your very full and brilliant life has been your real regard for your affectionate old friend, Sarojini Naidu.

An incident from my Madras days is worth mentioning. It relates to the famous Vaikom Satyagraha Movement. T. K. Madhavan used to meet me in Madras, although I now forget how our acquaintance started. We went to the Kakinada Congress session together and talked about untouchability. I suggested that this problem should be highlighted by a satyagraha campaign. He agreed and we discussed the proper venue. Though he preferred Haripad, eventually we agreed on Vaikom. How we developed this idea at Kakinada is described in Madhavan's biography. As I was in North India when the movement began, I could not join it personally.

Before I end this chapter on my life in Madras, certain family affairs deserve mention. At the time, the Nair community in Travancore was disintegrating, with the matriarchal system in disgrace and the extreme fragmentation of land and resources resulting from its collapse reducing the community to distress. The Nair Service Society of Mannath Padmanabhan was actively propagating partition. Although my uncle did not entirely accept this thesis, he helped the Society's educational work from the beginning. My uncle also recognized that the old order was irrevocably outdated and it would therefore be wise to make a voluntary division of joint family assets.

At that time, our family mustered a total strength of about forty, consisting of six or seven branches, distributed over

Chalayil and Pazhoor. To bring them together on an agreed scheme of division was no easy task, but uncle managed the feat. Thanks to his foresight, our family survived the new Marumakkathayam[2] legislation without much loss.

The next year, 1922, was the occasion of uncle's *shashtiabdapurti*. Uncle was then a much respected figure in Travancore, and my brother and I were keen on celebrating this function on an appropriate scale. Our friends from many distant places attended. Dr Krishnan Pandalai, Changanacherry Parameswaran Pillai, P. K. Narayana Pillai, Vallathol, Nalapat, C. Sankara Menon, Ambadi Krishna Menon and other distingushed guests came to Chalayil. That they should have gathered at this remote and inaccessible village was indeed a compliment to us and a tribute to uncle. Our Christian neighbours organized a boat-race for the occasion; the Ezhavas did something on their own and the Nair Service Society presented an address. All told, the function was marked by a show of communal harmony.

6

The Akali Mission

After resigning from the *Swarajya*, I pondered my next step. It was then that I received a telegram from C. F. Andrews. Gandhiji was staying at Andheri near Bombay at the time, having been released from Yeravada Jail. Andrews asked me to go there to meet Gandhiji. I left for Bombay promptly. Gandhiji was staying in an attractive house set in a coconut grove by the sea. He talked to me the same day and explained the mission to be entrusted to me.

It was a time when the Akali movement of the Sikhs had erupted into violence. The object of the Akalis was to vest all their temples in the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee. The erstwhile managers of these temples were called *Udasis* and they were little different from Hindus. Many gurudwaras contained Hindu idols. The Golden Temple of Amritsar itself was under government control. The Akalis wanted to change all this and set up the Shiromani Gurudwara Committeee to acquire sole control. The Committee was primed with vast contributions of money and it recruited and trained a semi-military volunteer corps of nearly fifty thousand. This force, called the Akali Dal, was almost an army in itself. During the two-year struggle with the government, the Committee and Dal were declared illegal bodies and the government set out to exterminate them by force. Most Sikh leaders were in prison, but since replacements were plentiful, the Akali agitation continued unabated.

The Committee enjoyed the support of the Congress and publicly accepted Gandhiji's principle of passive resistance. But since the Sikhs were a militant people and revelled in fighting, the Congress deputed a reliable person to give them proper advice. This was my old contemporary and friend

Gidwani. When the State government of Nabha arrested him, Gandhiji deputed me to Amritsar to take his place as the Congress representative.

Since Gandhiji was in jail in Poona most of the time I spent in Madras, he did not have much direct knowledge of me. It was not without surprise that I learned that he had chosen a comparative stranger like me for this difficult job. At first I ascribed the choice to Andrews, but could not imagine his advice would weigh much with Gandhiji in the affairs of the Congress. Inquiries later revealed that my selection was due to the advice of the then President of the Congress, Maulana Mohammed Ali. Mohammed Ali and I were good friends. As soon as he heard of my resignation from *Swarajya*, the Congress President decided to send me to Amritsar. When his letter reached Gandhiji, Andrews happened to be there and relayed the message to me.

Gandhiji's first question was whether I was prepared to face arrest immediately on arrival at Amritsar, since the Gurudwara Committee was an illegal body and association with it would be an offence. Satisfied by my reply, he gave me detailed instructions on my task there. He used to take me with him on his daily walks by the sea and instruct me. Towards the end he added: 'One point more. I was keeping it for the last. When I was in jail, Congressmen under the advice of Akalis took up the cause of the deposed Maharajah of Nabha. The Akalis claim that this is a matter affecting their religion. They are sending weekly *jathas*[1] to Jiro in Nabha to demonstrate against the government. I want you to send me an early report on this point.'

I set out for Amritsar with these orders in mind. I was well aware of the difficulties ahead. Failure to discharge the high responsibilities devolving on the representative of Gandhiji and the Congress would disgrace me, while success in my mission would establish my reputation. I reached Amritsar in an anxious frame of mind. Mangal Singh, the President of the Gurudwara Committee, received me. From his conversation I was able to acquire some knowledge of the condi-

tions in Amritsar. However, I decided to make thorough enquiries for some days before reporting to Gandhiji. I then began an intensive study of the Sikh claims and programmes. There were loud complaints in the press that the Nabha authorities had persecuted a *jatha* taken to Jiro and had interrupted the *Akhand Pata*[2] held at the local gurudwara. The government retorted that the *jatha* was full of armed men who had created trouble on the way and that a military parade of five hundred people was hardly the way to conduct an *Akhand Pata*! From my inquiries I ascertained that while the Sikh claims were valid, their activities were hardly along Gandhian lines. Moreover, the Akali movement was causing alarm and disquiet amongst other communities in the countryside. Every village had semi-military bodies of Sikh youth under local commanders and these were linked to district commands. This Akali Dal formation was intimidating Hindus and Muslims in the villages. After learning all the facts, I sent a report each to the Congress President, Maulana Mohammed Ali and to Gandhiji.

I need not say that this report was not very palatable to the Sikh leaders. I even heard from some Sikh friends that a few fanatics were inclined to kill me! I was not surprised because some Sikhs took killing lightly and never hesitated to destroy anyone who stood in their way. But Gandhiji accepted my report and the Akalis at that time lacked the power to challenge his views. While they did not do so, they were not prepared to follow his advice and conduct a non-violent struggle. In this situation, I decided that I should make my views clear to the Sikhs. These were that the Congress would support the Sikhs' claim to control their own temples, that even the government would not oppose this claim and that in the circumstances the Sikhs should work for a settlement of the dispute with the help of Congress leaders. I had consulted Motilal Nehru in advance and had also sounded Malcolm Hailey, Governor-designate of the Punjab, on a compromise of this nature. When I placed my proposal before Mangal Singh, the Gurudwara Committee's own dissensions came out

in the open. Mangal Singh confessed that the Committee was divided, with one powerful group insisting on the reinstatement of the deposed Nabha Maharajah. When I posed the question of how the future of the Sikh community had become involved with the Maharajah of Nabha, the answer was startling. Certain prominent Sikh leaders were in the Maharajah's pay and were quite prepared to let the Gurudwara problem hang fire to serve the Maharajah's ends. My efforts thereafter were to separate the Gurudwara question from the problem of the Nabha Maharajah, and to get them settled separately.

Maharajah Ripu Daman Singh of Nabha had been externed by the British for various misdeeds and detained at Dehra Dun. He had exploited the agitation to seek reinstatement. The army had large contingents of Sikhs, and Nabha calculated that the government would be reluctant to estrange that community.

When I reported all these details to Gandhiji he instructed me to go immediately to Dehra Dun and ascertain from the Maharajah of Nabha himself what exactly he wanted. Accordingly I went to Dehra Dun in May 1924. I asked for an interview which was fixed for 11 a.m. the next day. After preliminary dicussions lasting an hour, I came to the point. I quote a part of our conversation from a memorandum sent by me the same day.

Panikkar: Gandhiji and the Congress are ready to assist you, but at the time of your deposition, Gandhiji was in prison and he is not aware of all details.

Maharajah: I know that the Congress has agreed to help me. I am glad to know that Gandhiji is also of the same view. What details does he wish to know?

Panikkar: The first point is this. You have issued a proclamation that you abdicated voluntarily. If this is true, how does any enquiry arise at all?

Maharajah: The proclamation was signed under duress. I was in fact externed.

Panikkar: Really? If that is the case, Gandhiji will be willing to raise it with the government, and if no convincing explanation is forthcoming, he may also be prepared to resume the non-co-operation movement.

The Maharajah was very pleased. I added: 'But let me add one thing. When Gandhiji asks the government if they in fact externed you, the government may make allegations about your past conduct. If that is their justification, Gandhiji will ask for a public inquiry. Will you agree?'

At this the Maharajah became angry. 'I am not prepared to submit to an inquiry. Who are they to sit in judgement over me? Who is Gandhiji to ask for an inquiry?'

My answer was: 'No one wants an inquiry. But unless he is convinced that you have been treated unjustly, Gandhiji will not take any step. Hence it is in your own interest to establish the justice of your case. Moreover, if you did not abdicate voluntarily but were forced to do so, this has also to be established. Otherwise how can there be a restoration?'

By this time, the Maharajah understood my purpose and evaded any commitment, seeking to consult his legal adviser, who was expected the next day from Allahabad.

The Maharajah's Secretary was a brother of Sarojini Naidu, who was known to me, so I was able to learn something of the Maharajah's life in Dehra Dun. Even after his abdication, the Maharajah's personal life had continued to be as blameworthy as before. The more I heard, the more certain I became that the Congress should dissociate itself from him.

The lawyer, Durga Prasad, arrived the next day and after long consultations, a messenger came for me. Both my questions were straightaway answered by the Maharajah in the negative. He was not prepared to deny in writing that his abdication was voluntary, and he was not prepared to agree to a public enquiry on his conduct as Maharajah. I left the same day for Allahabad to report to Jawaharlal Nehru, then Secretary of the Indian National Congress.

Although I was acquainted with Motilal Nehru, I had not had any occasion to meet Jawaharlal until then. When I went to Amritsar, Nehru was in Nabha Jail and after his release,

we corresponded sometimes on the Sikh problems. When I went to Dehra Dun, he had asked me to report to him at Allahabad.

When I met Jawaharlal for the first time, he was about thiry-five years old and was even then a front-rank leader. His independence of mind was evident from his staunch allegiance to Gandhiji while his father led the Swarajya Party. Although he had not yet reached the top, he was widely recognized in India as the most important person of the younger generation.

Jawaharlal was very cordial and I stayed as his guest for two or three days in Anand Bhavan. I have in later years lived in many palaces and opulent residences, but the princely amenities of Anand Bhavan then amazed me, having at that stage had little experience of such luxury. Motilal Nehru was fonder of luxury than most Maharajahs and the appointments at Anand Bhavan were correspondingly grand. However, all this grandeur had not gone to Jawaharlal's head and he lived there almost like another guest.

One thing about Anand Bhavan delighted me and that was the library. I had never seen a more comprehensive library on politics. Even then Jawaharlal was in the habit of getting new books from Britain, America, France and other countries.

During my two days I was able to learn a good deal about Indian political affairs. I told Jawaharlal of the conclusions emerging from my investigations. My report made it clear that there were no grounds for supporting the Maharajah of Nabha, who was by nature vicious and as a ruler arbitrary and inhumane. If the Sikh community's problems were separated from the Nabha affair, the former could be easily settled. Jawaharlal advised me to forward a brief to Gandhiji setting out these conclusions and agreed to support my views. The Congress Committee was to meet at Ahmedabad soon, and accordingly I went there along with Jawaharlal.

I had another reason for meeting Gandhiji. Within a week of my arrival in Amritsar the Vaikom Satyagraha campaign had been launched by T. K. Madhavan, K. P. Kesava

Menon and others. I was the prime instigator of the campaign and my absence form Kerala at the time was adversely noticed. I had threfore requested Gandhiji to permit me to go to Vaikom and join my friends, but he insisted on my completing my task in Amritsar, which he considered quite important. This was why I had been unable to participate in the Vaikom Satyagraha movement.

My friend George Joseph, now dead, went promptly to Vaikom to lead the Satyagraha. Since the movement was based on the claim of the depressed classes to use the roads surrounding the temple, it was patent that only an injured party or a member of the higher classes responsible for that injury had any *locus standi* in the dispute. I issued a statement in the Madras papers that a Christian had no business to intervene in this matter. Because of Joseph's influence, Congressmen in Kerala resented my attitude and in fact issued a reply attacking me by implication. This was published in the name of Mr Ramunni Menon, a Secretary of the Kerala Congress Committee. I sent my statement and the reply to Gandhiji with a plea that he should not countenance the entry of non-Hindus into the Vaikom Satyagraha. Gandhiji supported my view, and I learned from the Madras papers that a Kerala deputation including among others Kurur Nambudiripad and K. Madhavan Nair were to meet Gandhiji in this connection. I also decided to be in Ahmedabad at this juncture.

I actually stayed in Sabarmati. There is no need to recount the routine of the Ashram. Gandhiji called me the same evening and questioned me about Sikh affairs. I gave him all the news and handed over the brief I had prepared on the Nabha question. Gandhiji agreed to read it and give me instructions the next day. I also mentioned the Vaikom Satyagraha, when he replied that he had studied the subject already and would deal with it when the Kerala deputation met him the next day.

There was a momentous session of the All-India Congress Committee that day. It was to decide the future relations

between the Swarajya Party and the Congress. Motilal Nehru, Vithalbhai Patel and Srinivasa Aiyangar among others, represented the former, while Mohammed Ali, Rajagopalachari, Abul Kalam Azad, Jawaharlal and others represented the non-co-operators. Many ordinary members from all over India had also gathered. After a heated debate, the subject of Council Entry was taken up for decision, but Motilal Nehru and others left the session. When Gandhiji got up to speak, I could see that he was actually in tears. It was a moving experience. What happened there is now history. Even though the majority was on Gandhiji's side, he respected the views of Motilal and others and conceded the leadership of the Congress to the Swarajya Party.

The next day Gandhiji received the Kerala deputation. He explained very clearly how non-Hindus stood in relation to the Vaikom Satyagraha and in effect endorsed my views. I stayed on for another day in order to find out what decision he took regarding the Sikh problem. From dawn to dusk, Gandhiji was giving numerous interviews. There were some Hindus with a complaint that the Agha Khan's followers were insulting them; Punjabis with a complaint that Dr Kitchlew was damaging the interests of the Hindus; Maulvis who were incensed by Swami Shraddhananda's reconversion of Muslims to the Hindu fold; people with personal grievances; Europeans who came merely to have a glimpse of the Mahatma; politicians consulting him on their problems; the hut was always surrounded by a crowd. It was a wonderful spectacle and I even feared that in all this commotion Gandhiji might forget my problem. However, I continued to wait for an opportunity.

At ten in the evening Gandhiji said: 'Exactly at twelve, I shall come out, and then we can decide everything.' I went out for dinner and came back at ten minutes to twelve and stood at the entrance of his room. Precisely at midnight, Gandhiji came out and seeing me at the door he said: 'You may return to Amritsar by the morning train. The Sikh leaders have not only accepted your suggestions but agreed

to carry them out. They have agreed to drop the Nabha affair.' I was pleased beyond measure. It was the first political assignment I had handled and to have completed it to Gandhiji's satisfaction was very gratifying.

When I returned to Amritsar I realized that my mission was almost over. The Sikh leaders immediately started negotiations with the government. The government had no objection to conceding their demands on other matters if the Nabha question was dropped. This happy ending left me with time to spare for literary work, in fact for the first time since leaving Aligarh. My stay in Amritsar resulted in the burlesque *Panki Parinayam.*[3] I had only recently read the *Nala Charitam chambu* afresh and the idea struck me then and I wrote it out in a few days.

I sent the first copy to Vallathol and he was so pleased that he sent me a stanza to be included in it! For nearly twelve years the work remained unpublished. I have seen many manuscript copies in circulation, and heard many people quote lines. Presumably the fact that it was a parody and something novel explains its popularity, since it does not have enough poetic merit to deserve such wide appreciation. In fact, several prominent people have complained that I did not include them in it! The former Cochin Maharajah, Appan Thampuran, Kollengode Vasudeva Rajah, Sir Sankaran Nair and others have asked me for copies, much to my surprise.

7

A Newspaper is Born

Although the problems of the Sikhs were more or less resolved, their growing interest in politics fostered among them an ambition to start an English daily of their own. Mangal Singh mooted this idea several times, but I did not sympathize with it. They wished to locate the paper in Amritsar. Whatever its religious importance, I felt that to base an English daily in a district centre would lead to disaster. At that time, Delhi, the capital of India, lacked a daily paper and if they were interested in locating the paper in Delhi, I told them, I would be prepared to assist. At first they resented my proposal. After all, Amritsar is the Kashi of the Sikhs. According to them the paper would be representative of the Sikhs only if it was published from there. If that was their view, I was equally definite that they should look elsewhere for support.

Delhi was not then the city we see today. Although it had become the capital of India ten years earlier, it still lacked the amenities needed in a capital. The Viceroy lived in a building within a middle-sized estate some way out of the city. The foundations for the present Mogul-sized viceregal palace had only just been laid and the construction of the present Secretariat too, had only just been undertaken, with its labyrinthine plan like the legendary fortress of Ravana where entry was possible, but exit difficult! The government offices were housed in crowded barracks where one lived in danger of being buried under stacks of files. Shopping centres like Connaught Circus and promenades like King's Way did not exist. The princely houses soon to orbit the viceregal palace like satellites around the sun existed only in the imagination. In short, Delhi then exemplified all the shortcomings

of a sudden transition from indigence to riches. In spite of these shortcomings, there was no place more suited to support a daily newspaper. Delhi was the railway centre of north India, and stood in the middle of cities like Allahabad, Lucknow and Lahore. In addition, it was the capital of the Indian empire. Since there was no other newspaper in Delhi, I insisted that we should locate it there and in the end they gave way. That was how I got involved in founding the famous *Hindustan Times.*

I had to stand firm on another point also. I stipulated that I could not be a party to lending support to the Nabha Maharajah and the paper would accordingly deal with national politics and not be a vehicle for the communal interests of the Sikhs. Finally this was also conceded, and immediately I moved to Delhi and set to work on preliminary arrangements. It was then that I realized the difficulties of publishing English newspapers in north India. Delhi had few compositors who could cope with English types nor press foremen who could manage a large press. My assistant editor was G. S. Raghavan, now no more. There was little in the field of journalism that he did not know. He was competent in every department from composing type to writing leading articles! Raghavan was more than a first-rate journalist, he was also a dependable friend. In spite of these virtues, he was handicapped in life by one serious defect. This was his extravagance. On a monthly income of five hundred rupees, Raghavan would build up an expenditure of one thousand and five hundred! He had a genius for buying superfluous things and for expensive clothes. Since his income could never keep pace with the demands on it, Raghavan was in the habit of borrowing money all round. Due to this single defect, in spite of his intelligence and ability, Raghavan was unable to reach the top rungs of the newspaper world.

At the inception of *The Hindustan Times,* his help was invaluable to me. I was familiar with journalism only from the editorial chair. Without Raghavan's help and advice

in other areas, I doubt if I could have brought the paper out.

My other assistant was Dr Ambadi Krishna Menon. He was one of my closest friends from my college days in England. I have rarely seen such a spotless character, so unselfish and utterly devoted. Almost a sanyasi in outlook, he had given up medical work to enter politics. When I started *The Hindustan Times*, he also came to Delhi at my invitation.

The paper was inaugurated by Gandhiji. The first issue contained articles by Motilal Nehru, Maulana Mohammed Ali and Jawaharlal. Because it was the only English newspaper in the capital, it attracted wide notice from the beginning. With the support of K. C. Roy of the Associated Press, I was able to establish high standards of journalism in *The Hindustan Times.*

The Hindustan Times soon got into a controversy over Travancore. A month before the paper started, the eminent ruler, Sri Mulam Tirunal Maharajah passed away and was succeeded by Maharani Sri Setu Lakshmi Bai as regent. The Resident of Travancore at that time was the celebrated C.H.C. Cotton. I began getting reports from correspondents that he used to interfere in the administration and that this was undesirable. After making further inquiries and ascertaining facts, I published the reports in *The Hindustan Times*, under the caption 'Cotton Epidemic in Travancore'.

This touched off a storm in Travancore. The government issued a formal denial of the statements in our reports, but the truth could not long be concealed. Accordingly, Cotton's friends like A. Narayana Pillai started writing to me that Cotton was a friend of the Nair community and attacks on him could only harm the community. I learned that an official inquiry was under way into the charges. Cotton also came to learn of this. He wanted to stop my attacks and persuaded some Nair officials who were friends of my uncle to influence him. I was on a visit to Kavalam at the time. When my uncle spoke to me to the effect that it would be unwise to attack the government of Travancore and suggested that I should leave newspaper work and return home

to manage the family affairs, I could see Cotton's hand even there! I pacified my uncle by agreeing to resign my editorship in six months time and come away.

During this period I made a close study of the Indian States. Since there was no book in English on this subject, I felt it would be useful to write one for laymen. I started work in January 1925 and devoted one hour in the morning and one in the evening to it. I used to read out the day's material to Dr Ambadi who was staying with me. In this way I completed the book by April.

My interest in Kerala history was also awakened at this time. The Dutch pastor, Fischer, had written a series of letters describing eighteenth-century Kerala. These were published by T. K. Krishna Menon in book form under the title *Kerala History*,[1] with an extensive commentary by the famous scholar K. P. Padmanabha Menon. The latter's notes were useful in many ways to any prospective historian of Kerala. Each point was fully elaborated and documented from original sources which testified to Padmanabha Menon's great erudition. However, the book was in no sense a history of Kerala. Krishna Menon asked me to review it in *The Hindu* and *The Modern Review*. Accordingly, I said that the book was valuable source material for researchers in history but I was disappointed that Padmanabha Menon's efforts did not result in a real history of Kerala. Krishna Menon did not relish this. He wrote to me that writing a history of Kerala was difficult and easier said than done. To write a book about at least one phase of Kerala history became thereafter a challenge for me.

At about this time Gandhiji came to stay in Delhi. His first twenty-one-day fast took place there. During the fast, there was a ceaseless inflow of leaders to Delhi from all over India to wait on him and to settle the problems that provoked the fast. A week after starting the fast, Gandhiji called me and gave me some instructions. The annual conference of the Swarajya Party was being held in Calcutta under the presidency of Deshabandhu Das. Gandhiji had learned that

some followers of the Nabha Maharajah planned to introduce a resolution in his support at the Conference. Since there was little time, Gandhiji wanted me to go to Calcutta immediately and tell Das and Motilalji the truth about Nabha. I started at once, but got down at Allahabad, intending to spend a day with Jawaharlalji and enlist his help in bringing round Motilalji. The offices of the Congress and the dissident Swarajya Party were in the same building in Allahabad! The General Secretary of the parent organization was the son and that of the breakaway party the father. When I reached Anand Bhavan Asaf Ali also arrived. We were not unfriendly with one another but my visit seemed to inconvenience him in some way. It was Jawaharlal who told me the reason. Asaf Ali had come on a contrary mission to mine. He had come on behalf of the Nabha Maharajah to canvass support for him from the Swarajya Party. But our conflicting briefs presented no dilemma to Motilal Nehru. He told me definitely that the Conference would not take up any resolution on Nabha. However, he advised me to meet Deshabandhu Das and convey Gandhiji's message to him also.

Asaf Ali did not know what Motilal had told me. He travelled to Calcutta along with Panditji and in the same carriage. The Nabha Maharajah's followers must have concluded that their case was won. I also travelled in the same train but withdrew to another end. Having gained my point, I saw no need to proclaim it aloud.

I stayed in Calcutta for only two days. As Gandhiji's messenger, I was able to meet Deshabandhu without delay. When I gave him the full details about Nabha, he gave me the same assurance as Motilalji.

I attended the Swarajya Party conference. Asaf Ali and I sat in adjacent chairs on the platform. He said laughingly: 'My friend, you have won. But you could have told me in Allahabad itself!' 'There is no question of my winning or losing. In this I am merely a messenger of Gandhiji', I replied.

I was about to leave Calcutta from Howrah station, when

Deenabandhu Andrews met me with a message from Tagore. He told me that Gurudev wished to discuss something important with me next morning and I should accordingly stay over to pay my respects to him before leaving the next day. I was happy to do so. If I had known of Tagore's presence in Calcutta, I would not have left without calling on him. Following Andrew's instructions, I called at the Tagore family mansion.

As is well known, the family was old, distinguished and wealthy. The senior member of the family actually enjoyed the title of Maharajah. For centuries, the Tagore family had led Bengal by virtue of aristocratic birth, intellect and educational attainment. When I saw their palatial home in Calcutta, I realized that the tradition was still active. The Tagore mansion in Calcutta was the headquarters of the different Tagores who reigned over the different arts. I saw the poet there and after kind greetings, he said: 'Tell Gandhiji, as from me, that I have to go to South America immediately. I am committed to this journey at the insistence of people there. It is only out of compulsion that I am leaving the country now and not because I am unaware of the gravity of the situation. Please ask Mahatmaji not to misunderstand me.' I agreed to do so. Before leaving I requested him to give me a message for my newspaper. After a little reflection, he gave me this message: 'This is what I have to say to India now, don't be misled by personalities and forget the truth.'

I returned the same day. All the way, I pondered the message and tried to guess its meaning. On reaching Delhi, I gave the poet's personal message to Gandhiji and also quoted the cryptic message given to my paper. Gandhiji merely smiled.

The negotiations between the Sikhs and the government were almost complete by the end of February and then they seemed to lose interest in *The Hindustan Times*. They wished to sell the paper to Motilal Nehru or Malaviyaji. Malaviyaji and Lajpat Rai were allies and Lajpat Rai did not like me. For

certain reasons, I had no respect for Rai. If the Sikhs were to sell the paper, I wished it would be to Motilalji. I put the proposition to him. It was then, early in March, that I discovered that Mangal Singh had already sold the paper to Malaviyaji and that Malaviyaji and Lajpat Rai had jointly taken over the management.

Malaviyaji was concerned with the interests of the Hindu community rather than with politics. No one can deny that he was a profoundly good man, almost a *maharishi*. Nor can we forget his service to Hindus and to *sanatana dharma*. Madan Mohan Malaviya was a revered national figure—founder of the Hindu University, a saintly person devoted to maintaining the ideals of the Hindu *dharma*, who was universally respected for his spotless personal character. But Lajpat Rai was a very different type. This self-styled Lion of the Punjab was the embodiment of egoism, a schemer with a deceptive appearance of simplicity. I knew that their association could not endure long. They were linked only by a devotion to Hinduism and I could guess that *The Hindustan Times* which had made a name as a political newspaper would be converted into a communal mouthpiece under them. If this happened, I was resolved to hand in my resignation without delay. When I consulted Gandhiji, Mohammed Ali and others, I was advised by them not to resign precipitately, but only when any substantial cause arose to warrant it.

Such an occasion arose within a month. Malaviyaji called one of my subordinates and gave him certain instructions about the contents of the paper. I reprimanded the sub-editor promptly for taking such instructions without consulting me. Malaviyaji objected to my reprimand. On this issue, I submitted my resignation and left Delhi the next day.

The cause of my resignation was widely debated in the Indian press. Most of the major papers endorsed my stand. The Congress President, Mohammed Ali, also wrote in the paper *Comrade* in somewhat flattering terms about me, fully supporting my action.

8

A Change of Course

My career in journalism ended thus. But this part of my life was not entirely fruitless. Close contact with national leaders, an inside view of political affairs, experience of carrying out responsible tasks—the three years which provided all these were certainly not mis-spent. In fact, I considered them a training for the future. But from the financial point of view, this period was totally unrewarding. However, since I never have had any desire or talent for making money, this did not worry me very much.

I went home to Kavalam to think about my future. Since I had promised my uncle that I would resign from the newspaper within six months and return home, he was very pleased with my action. He advised me to wait a little before deciding on the next step. Soon afterwards I got a letter from Motilal Nehru written in his own hand. He wrote that he was ready to start a newspaper for me and accordingly asked me to go back to Delhi. While this was encouraging, I wanted a respite from jounalism and hence deferred replying to him for two weeks.

In the meanwhile I happened to call on Dr Krishnan Pandalai, then Presidency Magistrate at Madras. He told me that he had read for the Bar at the age of thirty-five and since I was barely thirty at the time, it was not too late to start a new life. My experience of the world would actually help my future. I felt his advice was sound and requested him to convey his views to my uncle. Dr Pandalai wrote the same day and I followed up his letter with one of my own. My uncle replied promptly. His instructions were to go back to Europe immediately to read for the Bar.

I set about it at once. The police authorities in Madras

strongly opposed the grant of a passport to me because of my political views. It was only with the help of V. T . Krishnamachari, then Law Secretary to the Madras government, that I got my passport.

It was on 27 September 1925 that I arrived in England for the second time. I enrolled at the Middle Temple and then set about planning what I should do during my stay in the West. As a journalist, I wanted to build up connections with leading British newspapers and magazines, which would help me to earn some money and a reputation. I also wanted to do research on Kerala history in European archives and to visit France and Germany among other countries.

Since I felt it would not be proper to ask for money from home to pursue these ideas, my first task was to write articles for *Daily News* and *Daily Herald*. I thought of other means of supplementing my income. It was at this time that the Civil Service Commission of England sent me a letter asking if I would serve as an examiner in Indian history for I.C.S. candidates. This was indeed an honour. It also carried an annual fee of one hundred and fifty pounds. Since examination papers could not be sent out of England, I had to stay in England during the month of August. Once this engagement had been fulfilled, I was free to carry out the rest of my plans.

I had brought with me to London the manuscript of my book on the Indian Princely States written in Delhi. I had set all my hopes on this work. Since the subject was important and no Indian had hitherto produced any book on it, I felt certain that its publication would be beneficial. I submitted it to several publishers but all of them rejected it with the same remark. They said the book was good and they would be glad to publish it on that account, but since they did not expect it to have a wide market, they wanted me to bear the cost of production. Since I was not agreeable to publication at my own expense, it looked as though this book on which I had invested so much effort would remain unpublished. Thinking I should consult someone better acquainted with

publishers, I invited my old friend, Frank Brown, the sub-editor of *The Times*, to dinner. In the course of conversation I told him about my book on the Indian States and asked him to read it and tell me if it was good enough for publication. After reading it, Brown said it should be published immediately and that if I submitted it to the firm of Martin Hopkinson, run by some friends of his, he would recommend its publication. Following his advice, I sent a fresh typescript of the book to Martin Hopkinson the very next day.

It was two months before I heard from them. The reply was signed by an old Oxford tutor of mine, Dr John Murray. Murray entered government service during the war and made a name in many fields, and subsequently entered Parliament. Mrs Murray was very wealthy and Murray had left his Oxford job and was enjoying a life of leisure. It was through his marriage that Murray became a Director of the firm of Martin Hopkinson. Although it was a full year before my book came out, its publication presented no difficulty after I got Murray's letter.

After thus setting my affairs in order in about three months time, I prepared to go abroad. My first visit was to Portugal. My idea was to look up available books and records dealing with Kerala history and gather data. While I was worrying over the problem of travelling alone in a strange country, I happened to meet my friend V. K. John who readily agreed to travel with me. John had come to London to read for the Bar after a short spell of legal practice in Ernakulam. Later, a leading lawyer of Madras, he was an intelligent and entertaining person, well-versed in current affairs. We travelled by sea and reached Lisbon early in December.

When I saw the decline of the Portuguese, who had once altered the course of Indian history, cornered the whole trade with the Orient and established a great empire, I was struck by the irony of things. A nation which was once so rich as to give away the island of Bombay as dowry for a princess, had very evidently become impoverished. Untidy streets, shoddy buildings, a poor people, were what struck me in

Lisbon. Was it from this capital that numberless ships sailed to India? Was it to this capital that the gems and wealth of India were plundered and brought? Where had all that wealth gone? Where are all the mighty soldiers of old Portugal? Today Lisbon does not have even a part of the shipping that touches Bombay which was given away as dowry by the Portuguese. What place in today's world have the heirs of Vasco da Gama, Duarto Pacico and Albuquerque?

This should not be understood to mean that Lisbon has no elegant boulevards or splendid gardens or other hallmarks of a capital. The Avenida de Liberdada is a magnificent boulevard. There are also some outstanding buildings and churches. But even at first sight anyone could see that Lisbon was the capital of a declining nation. The climate in December is delightful. The cold and snow-fall of other European countries is absent. With its luxuriant vegetation, one might say that Portugal enjoyed a perpetual summer.

After seeing the port of Belam from which Vasco da Gama set sail for India, and the cathedral built there with booty from India, the museums and libraries, I started my historical research. I was then able to make the acquaintance of some Indians who had come from Goa for their education. Although they bore European names like Furtado and Mascarenhas they were in reality Indians. Anton DeCruz among them went to Berlin to study painting and became a celebrity. I became friendly with DeCruz from the beginning. Through him I got to know the statesman Vigo Simoich. Simoich was not only a statesman but also an acknowledged scholar and he was able to help me greatly in my research.

Because of my contact with Vigo Simoich I was able to meet important journalists in Lisbon. Newspapers like *O Secolo* and *Dairila Lisboa* asked for articles and published my views. The first question everyone asked was: 'How is the Mahatma now?' The fact that I was also involved in the non-co-operation movement and knew Gandhiji personally did not fail to confer some distinction on me.

Throughout my stay in Portugal I made it a practice to work

during the day in Lisbon's National Library. Their collection of records on India is large. With the help of friends like Andre and Furtado, I made a careful study of all those dealing with Kerala. This was how I came to write the book *Malabar and the Portuguese*.[1]

In January 1926 I reached Paris. There were over twenty Indian students reading in the famous Sorbonne University. They had a Hindustan Samaj to which John and I turned in our quest for convenient lodging. They were holding a meeting that evening and invited me to attend as a guest. At the meeting I had an opportunity to meet Germaine Merlange, secretary of the French society, Friends of the Orient; the leader of the Indo-Chinese Freedom Party, Duong van Gia; Mono Nutu of Java; Chin of the Kuomintang Party from China; the young French poet, Jean Loyson, and others. The secretary of the Samaj, Prabodh Chandra Bagchi, gave me a formal welcome and I was obliged to respond. On hearing that I had pariticipated in Indian politics and had edited two prominent newspapers, the company wished to know more about me. Since I myself wanted to learn something about the freedom movements of far eastern countries like Indo-China and Java, this was the beginning of a comradeship.

There is no capital in the world as cosmopolitan as Paris. People from all the world over came to live in Paris, and the Parisians did not discriminate against them in the least. It will not be wrong to call Paris the capital of the world. That I should have made so many international friendships so early in the way I did is characteristic of that city. Little things set the course in life's journey. It was by sheer accident that I happened to go to that meeting. But of the people I met that day, three remained to influence my mental development in unusual measure, as will be evident later.

After the meeting Germaine Merlange called me aside and told me that it was her job to make things easier for visitors from the Orient, and she would be happy to introduce me to anyone I wanted to meet or to arrange interviews with journalists. Germaine could not have been more than twenty-five at the

time. Her father was a senior official in the French railways and she had been educated in Paris and Oxford. By looks, birth and education Germaine had the entry to any society in Paris and this offer of hers was very gratifying to me. I had spent almost all my money in Portugal and needed to earn some by journalism. I therefore took her at her word and invited her to dinner.

I learned from our conversation that she knew many members of the French press quite well and that many French literary figures were her close friends. I told her that I wished to write for newspapers and magazines. Since I could not write in French, I wanted a competent person to translate my articles. She replied that if I were willing to share the fees with her, she herself would be glad to translate for me. I found out later that she had quarrelled with her father over her marriage and had to fend for hereself. In any event, her proposal struck me as convenient.

This journalistic partnership continued, on a mutually profitable basis, up to the time I left Europe to take up a post in Kashmir. Thus I was enabled to write for many internationally renowned journals like *Europe*, *Europe Nouvelle*, and *Literaire*. I had only to write the articles. Germaine undertook to meet the editors, to fix the remuneration and correct the proofs. It was difficult to say how valuable the friendship and assistance of this learned and modest lady were to me. Today, after being De Gaulle's secretary during the war and thus securing a high position in French politics, she is a celebrity in France and renowned in many ways. I should add that our friendhip continues unimpaired to this day.

I decided to make my headquarters in Paris not only because of this advantage in my work. During my student days in Oxford ten years ago, the First World War had converted Europe into a battlefield and hence my knowledge of France and Paris was confined to books. My first plan was only to stay for a fortnight and to see the museums and libraries of Paris, the Louvre, Versailles and other sights. But when I got to know France, it seemed to me that anyone who wants to

understand European culture must live in Paris. There is no other place in the world where man can enjoy such freedom. Paris is the acknowledged centre of the fine arts. Those who wish to advance in music or painting, whether they belong to London or New York, come to Paris. The University at Paris is not only a seat of multifarious learning, it is also a perpetual congress of thinkers. The sage Sylvain Levy taught Sanskrit there. Bergson used to lecture on philosophy. Curie was a professor there. As for politics, one might say that Paris was a veritable council for European affairs. Exiled freedom fighters from many countries used to gather in Paris: Italian leaders escaping from the clutches of Mussolini, Polish leaders seeking refuge from Pilsudski, anti-Communist Russians, anti-Kemal Turks, revolutionaries externed from India. In short, Paris was a haven of refuge for exiles from all over the world. Only in Paris do we find a complete absence of colour bar. Everyone knows that the British look down on coloured people. The reverse was true of Paris. Negro or Mongol, Hindu or Briton, each man was respected according to his education and status.

One thing especially attracted me to Paris. Admission to the famous Sorbonne University was open to anyone. On payment of a nominal fee, any adult could attend the lectures. The French do not trade in education. Their policy is to give it away. Only those who have experienced the difficulty of entering British universities can appreciate the universal welcome that Paris University offers. It is not for nothing that the world applauds Paris as *la nouvelle Athene* and as the mother of learning and the fine arts. People come like pilgrims to Paris not only from all European countries but from China, Japan, Siam, Africa, and America; everyone gets the same welcome. How much I came under the spell of Paris can be guessed from the fact that at that time I wrote a poem about the city.

I lived in 36 Rue des Ecoles, opposite the College de France. The landlady, Madame Bouvain, was attentive to my comforts, and so I stayed on there throughout my residence in Paris. It

was convenient in many ways. First, it was right in the middle of the university institutions. Secondly, my friends lived nearby. Besides, the rent was very low and when needed Madame Bouvain was prepared even to lend me money! These were substantial advantages indeed.

My chief friends in Paris were the poet Jean Loyson, the Indo-Chinese Duong Van Giao and the Javanese Mono Nutu. Duong was an Annamese, a Buddhist, learned, patriotic, very intelligent and an excellent lawyer. After taking a doctorate in French law from Paris, he married a French lady of equal attainments. Duong had only one desire in life and that was to terminate the political dependence of his motherland. His eloquence, his literary ability and above all, his nobility of mind earned him many important friends in France.

We took to each other like brothers from the first. We used to meet daily and discuss political subjects, especially the future of Asia and what could be done immediately to better it. In response to an invitation from Jawaharlalji, Duong attended the Calcutta Congress in 1928. Later he took part in the liberation movement of Indo-China and was imprisoned several times. After independence he occupied a high position in Annam, but was assassinated by his enemies.

Mono Nutu was not a mature leader like Duong, but he was well-endowed with patriotism and strength of character. Java under Dutch rule was even then seething with the pressure for freedom. All the prominent leaders in Java too were moderates, but as in India, the young were radicals. But there was one major difference. In 1926 most of the young people in Java belonged to the Communist Party. The association of Javanese students in Europe adopted communism as its creed. Mono Nutu was its secretary. Although he was not attached to communism or Russia, I suspect that in course of time he too was drawn into their web. Anyway, in 1927 Mono Nutu while in Paris got a letter to say that his father was seriously ill. Disregarding the advice of friends, he went to Holland to embark for

Java. As soon as he crossed the border, the Dutch government arrested him. He later played a major part in the Indonesian freedom struggle and became a minister.

Besides these two, I had some other friends in Paris. Prion Mantri of Siam was the son of a diplomat. Aristocratic and handsome, he paid little attention to his studies. In the Second World War, he sided with the Japanese and became Deputy Prime Minister in the government of Marshal Songgram. When I visited Siam recently I found him occupying a high post. Ali Bey from Azerbaijan and the Chinese Chin were my other friends.

We jointly set up an Oriental Society. Chin was its President, myself its Vice-President and Duong its Secretary. Nearly thirty people from Indo-China and Java belonged to this Society. Our object was to correct the false propaganda often appearing in European newspapers about the countries of the East and to represent our countries in the various European conferences. Some four or five of us used to gather every evening in the Domago coffee house and exchange news from the far east. Chin used to tell us about China; Mono Nutu about Java; while Duong was abreast of developments in most countries.

It was at one of these discussions that I met Mohammed Hatta. With this individual, who became a leader of the freedom struggle in Java and served as Foreign Minister and Vice-President of the Indonesian Republic, I was friendly from the beginning. I have stayed as his guest in Holland for a period of four weeks.

Such associations laid the foundation for my book, *The Future of South-East Asia.*[2] Many people wondered how I came to write the book without visiting Indo-China, Java or Siam! Many reviewers and local officials have asked me how I gained such an intimate knowledge of their politics and internal affairs. My constant association for two years with these friends, as explained above, taught me a good deal about these countries.

In 1926 delegates to a World Peace Conference assembled

at Bierville near Paris. Its organisers were friends of Duong. One day Duong told me that it was essential for us to go there and speak about the politics of the Orient. I was quite willing. We soon elected a body of representatives from each Asian country. Since Chin was not then in Paris, as Vice-President of our society, I was the leader of this delegation.

The Bierville Conference was the first international conference in which I participated. Although not officially sponsored, it was attended by representatives from all European countries It is worth noting that some small countries sent their diplomatic representatives to the Conference. The Italian delegation was headed by Signor Netti, a statesman who was for long Prime Minister of his country. The Conference was planned on a grand scale. Bierville was an attractive location. In this town barely sixty miles from Paris, arrangements were made to accomodate some two thousand delegates in comfort.

After finishing the valuation of the I.C.S. answer papers I reached Paris two days before the Conference. In consultation with Duong, we decided to prepare a paper for circulation at the Conference on the need for a proclamation of independence by Asian countries. I was entrusted with the drafting of the paper. The paper presented bore the signatures of the entire delegation. In it I argued that British rule in India was responsible for mortgaging the freedom of Asia and as long as Britain's empire in India continued, world peace would be in danger and the freedom of other Asian countries thus depended on India's own independence. No one in those days appreciated the international significance of the Indian claim to independence. Only when a group of advocates for freedom from several Asian countries seized on this point did the major newspapers of Europe realize that the Indian claim had important implications elsewhere.

Although my own speech was in English, Duong's oratory reinforced my views. On the concluding day of the Conference, I was selected to follow Signor Netti in the broadcast proceedings.

Apart from these activities, I was also trying to show

Europeans something of the greatness of Indian culture through my writings in French papers and magazines. It was this that brought me into contact with many prominent people in France, the chief of whom is Madame Juliet Duray. She was a lawyer practising in the Paris High Court. She had read law in Paris, Oxford and New York and taken a Doctorate. I made her acquaintance in 1926, three years after she had started practice. Parisian lawyers used to elect a young barrister every year to give a lecture on some important case before the Bar Association. In 1926 Madame Duray was so elected. She decided to lecture on the trial and conviction of Gandhiji. It was during her quest for materials for the lecture that we first met.

Juliet Duray was certainly an extraordinary woman. Her father was a member of the French parliament. Her mother-in-law was the sister of the Belgian Finance Minister Jasphar. Juliet's sister Louise was Professor of French Literature in the Government College. I used to spend my weekends in their villa near Paris. The uncommon scholarship of these sisters helped me to understand modern trends in French and Italian writing. Their husbands were two different types: Louise's husband Robert Hudia was a socialist while Juliet's husband Duray was a conservative. This friendship thus enabled me also to see different aspects of French politics.

Another great man I knew in Paris was the Hungarian, Felix Vaiz. Before the First World War, Vaiz had attained a European reputation as the editor of *Revue Politique International*. He was learned in French, English, German and other languages and was interested in the history of the Orient and especially in Buddhism. After we became friends Vaiz and I jointly started a journal called *Revue des Nations*. This was tri-lingual and Vaiz edited the French section, while the German section was edited by the scholar Richard Wilhelm. I was in charge of the English section. This quarterly journal came out regularly until my return to India.

In December 1926 I went to Berlin. It was around that time that I received a compensation amount for loss incurred

in the sinking of my ship in 1918. I wanted to spend this money in Germany itself, and in any event I had not seen that country.

At that time many Indians who had opposed Britain during the First World War and were thus considered revolutionaries were living in Berlin. Notable among them were Virendranath Chattopadhyaya (brother of Sarojini Naidu), Rajah Mahendra Pratap and Chempaka Raman Pillai of Travancore. Narayanan Nambiar, brother of Professor Candeth was also there. Of these, Chattopadhyaya and Nambiar were communists and unceasing communist propagandists. Chempaka Raman Pillai was strongly against communism. Raman Pillai came to Europe in his boyhood as the adopted son of Sir John Strickland and had almost become a German. Still he had an indescribable longing to see his native Travancore. When speaking of his homeland which he left as a boy, Raman Pillai almost broke into tears. But he died without seeing it. Certainly in the rolls of prominent Travancoreans, Chempaka Raman Pillai has a place.

Pillai's associates were Rajah Mahendra Pratap and Moulvi Barkatulla. This group disliked Chattopadhyaya and company. During the war, the Germans made use of both factions, but used to favour Chempaka Raman Pillai more. At the time of my visit to Berlin, Chattopadhyaya retained considerable influence among communists and socialists, while Raman Pillai was influential among businessmen and conservatives.

I went to Berlin ignorant of this factionalism. Both factions were cordial to me. Raman Pillai introduced me to many prominent Germans and used his influence in several quarters to help me. Chattopadhyaya assisted me in placing my articles in prominent Berlin newspapers. Since I had no desire to involve myself with revolutionaries, I was friendly with both but kept my distance during my stay there.

I returned to London in March 1927. My book on the Indian States had emerged from the press and I hoped to have it released in April. After staying in London for two weeks correcting the proofs, I went to Holland. I wanted to gather

materials in Holland for the book, *Malabar and the Dutch*.[3] I knew that many records of Kerala were available in the Dutch capital, the Hague, and in Leiden University. In addition, Mohammed Hatta, whom I met in Paris through Mono Nutu had invited me to stay with him. As Hatta was even then the leader of Javanese youth, I had no difficulty in staying in the Hague and Leiden. Besides, I had no lack of friends to translate Dutch records or to read original Dutch works and select necessary data for me.

Java was a Hindu country until the 16th century. Although the people are today Muslims by religion, their culture is wholly based on the Hindu and Buddhist religious traditions. One of my close Javanese friends was called Muhad Sastra Vidagdh! The eating habits of the Javanese are similar to those of Kerala. I still consider it my good fortune to have spent some weeks with Javanese friends. As many of them knew English, they were able to help me in my research work. This was how I managed to write the history of the Dutch in Malabar. It may be mentioned that I had an opportunity to write about India and also to deliver some lectures at the Hague.

I returned to London in May. At the time, the affairs of the Indian States were attracting much attention in India as well as England. In a letter that the Viceroy, Lord Reading, wrote to the Nizam of Hyderabad in 1926, the doctrine of paramountcy was stated so forcibly and bluntly that many princes were deeply offended. The Government of India's view was that the princes' powers were not only subject to British suzerainty, but were also subject to regulation or curtailment by virtue of British paramountcy. The Indian princes were fully convinced of their internal sovereignty and they felt this was an intolerable assault on it. The newly elected Chancellor of the Indian Princes' Chamber, Maharajah Bhupendra Singh of Patiala, and the permanent members of its Committee, the Maharajahs of Kashmir, Bikaner and others decided to oppose the British view and seek a clear delimitation of the power of paramountcy itself.

They set about this promptly, and their first step was to depute Colonel K. N. Haksar, Minister in Gwalior and Rushbrook Williams, Minister in Patiala to England to consult the best lawyers on this question. My book on the Indian States came out at this juncture. The book categorically refuted the doctrine of paramountcy and carried a weighty foreword from the well-known statesman Lord Olivier, a former Secretary of State for India. In the foreword he advanced a powerful plea for a thorough inquiry into the relations between the Indian princes and the British Crown.

My book created a storm of controversy. Many years ago Lee Warner had written a book extolling the policy of the British government and ignoring the rights of the Indian princes. Since then no one had written any book on this important question. In fact, Lee Warner's views had gradually acquired the authority of a scripture. It is hardly surprising that my book opposing Lee Warner's views and refuting the government's claims seemed rank heresy to officials and an opportune aid to the princes. Although the book was in the main favourable to the Indian princes, all the papers reviewing it including *The Times* praised its impartiality and scholarship. In France and America too jurists gave the book appreciative reviews. Indian papers like *The Bombay Chronicle* expressed the view that the book would usher in a new age in the relations between the Indian States and the Indian government.

The deposed Maharajah of Nabha was extremely annoyed at the publication because the book dealt with Nabha dispassionately and without siding with him. He issued a statement in some newspapers bringing many charges against the book. My friend, G. S. Raghavan, who knew that I had written the book in Delhi before returning to England, disposed of the Maharajah's charges in a detailed reply.

A week before publication, I sent a proof copy of the book to Colonel Haksar. One day when I was passing his hotel, Haksar saw me and invited me in. Haksar had never met me before, so I am still unable to understand how he recog-

nized me when I passed by. After discussing political matters in general for some time, he asked me point blank if I was interested in accepting an official post in Kashmir. I replied that his suggestion would have to be carefully thought over and considering my previous career, I couldn't say how far an official post in an Indian State would suit me. Haksar thought for a while and then said: 'I know almost all about your past career. I am not inviting you to take up an ordinary job. A committee will soon be set up to study the relationship between the Indian States and the British government. Work connected with it should suit you very well. Don't think that you will be asked to go as just another official.' I promised to give him a considered reply within a week and left.

When I consulted my friends on this subject, they gave me conflicting advice. I myself had serious doubts whether it would be right to exchange service to the country for service to a prince. However, after thinking at length on all aspects of the question, I felt that I should accept the offer. The reasons which prompted me to decide thus are set out in a memorandum I drew up then, and which is summarized below.

First, it was clear to me that a Travancorean like me was unlikely to attain any position of vantage in Indian affairs; the people of Kerala are only a minor element of the Indian polity. Hence there are many obstacles confronting any Keralite seeking to rise in Indian politics. True, Sankaran Nair and T. M. Nair rose to prominence in Madras. But they hailed from the Malabar district, a part of Madras State. They resided in Madras. Nevertheless, neither of them achieved the status they deserved on the Indian political stage. In this situation, I could see no clear or proper path of advancement for a Travancorean like myself. The only other alternative was journalism. I had already confronted the hurdles along that path.

Second, I was already past thirty-two years in age. To drift unsettled hereafter seemed unwise in every way. It was time I paid attention to my children's education. While

I was in Europe, my wife and children were living at Kavalam. I was plagued with remorse over the privations of a wife so long separated from her husband and neglecting the responsibilities for the proper upbringing of the children. It seemed to me that a fixed residence, freedom from financial worry, facilities for the proper education of the children—these were the primary desiderata. My work hitherto had earned me very little. I realized that if this were to continue, it would be impossible for me to educate my children properly or to bring them up well. For this reason too, I felt that a stable occupation was advisable.

Third, I was aware that many political negotiations were going on. I must confess that I wanted to take part in these. I saw the work of the Committee mentioned by Colonel Haksar as a means to achieve this. As it happened, my book also had a part in the conjunction of events that gave rise to the Butler Committee and it is not surprising that I wished to have a similar part in shaping the views of that Committee.

I conveyed my decision to Colonel Haksar within the agreed time-limit.

In every critical stage of my life, I have been guided by the affection, regard and advice of certain remarkable men whom I came to regard as my *gurus*. I had no influential relations, nor was my family powerful. I was always helped on by friends. During my college days in England, my source of help and inspiration was Dr T. B. Strong, whom I still revere like a father. After my return to India, the man whose disinterested help and guidance shaped my life was Syed Ross Masood. At this new stage of life and for long afterwards, the man who was my *guru* and whose affection, advice and assistance forwarded my career was Kailas Narayan Haksar.

Haksar was born in a distinguished Kashmiri Brahmin family. From the age of twenty he served Maharajah Madhav Rao Scindia of Gwalior and became his trusted lieutenant. In appearance he was handsome, dignified and the personification of Brahmin aristocracy. His profound natural intelligence had been reinforced by discipline. A cultivated mind,

brilliant conversation, wide experience and extraordinary learning in Persian and English were the qualities that set Haksar out among the great personalities of India. After the death of Madhav Rao Scindia in 1925, many princes including the Maharajah of Kashmir offered Haksar their prime minsterships at high salaries, but because of his loyalty to his dead master, Haksar declined these and continued in Gwalior, serving the young heir apparent. It was at this time that the princes invited him to advise the Chamber of Princes. I consider it my good fortune that from our first meeting he took a great interest in me and I had equal regard for him.

Accepting the appointment in Kashmir led to changes in my plans. I had received an invitation while in Berlin to visit Russia for a study tour. Britain and Russia were at that time in a state of open unfriendliness. Moscow was getting ready to celebrate the tenth year of the Soviet regime and my invitation was to join these celebrations. If I were to leave for the Kashmir post, I would have to give up these activities. I would also have to withdraw from the League Against Imperialism then being convened by my friends which I had planned to join. In short, I slowly broke off most of my associations in Europe.

Haksar had promised to telegraph me in September about my appointment. Meanwhile, after completing valuation of the I.C.S. examination papers, there was nothing to prevent me from returning home.

While getting ready for the return journey, I decided to write another book on politics. I learned that Parliament was going to appoint a Commission to study the question of Indian constitutional reforms (the Simon Commission, as it was called). It occurred to me that it would be appropriate to make a thorough review of the changes in India, during the past eight years arising from the Montague reforms. I started on it immediately and this was how my book, *The Working of Dyarchy*,[4] came about. I had only a month and a half to collect the data for the book and exactly two weeks to write it!

Unless I completed the book before taking up the appointment in Kashmir, my official status would make it impossible for me to publish any book on current politics. This was what drove me to complete the book, begun on 2 September, by 17 September.

On 17 September 1927 I received Haksar's telegram that I was appointed to the post in Kashmir. One can say that the first part of my life ended with this development. The scenes, characters and events of the next part of my life are very different from those that went before. It would be true to say that I had entered a totally new world. I propose to deal at length with this in the coming chapters.

9

Adviser in Kashmir

I took up my appointment in Kashmir on 2 January My life since then has been mostly involved in politics o importance. I played no small part in the negotiatio constitutional reform that took place between 1930 and Since I have already dealt with this in another book not propose to repeat the details here. These recolle are concerned with my personal endeavours and aspirati

I travelled home in the French steamer, *Amjer*. For half the voyage, our shipmates included the ex-Mah Tukoji of Indore, the American woman he had deci marry, Nancy Miller, and Jawaharlal Nehru and his f Jawaharlal was accompanied by his wife, Kamala nicknamed Beti, and daughter Indira. In addition, a companion, K. K. Pillai, who was running a busin England under the name Nair & Nair.

The story of Tukoji Maharajah's embroilment wi dancer Mumtaz Begum and his consequent abdication the throne had only recently created a sensation. Af abdication, he purchased a mansion in a village near Pa lived there in princely style. Even of this retreat, we rumours in London—that he had been smitten by a American woman. He had now set out for India wi idea of converting her to Hinduism and marrying her.

Nowadays it is not unusual for Indians to marry Eu women. On the other hand, it is rare for European n marry Indian women. Many people doubt if mixed ma are socially desirable There is no doubt however th Hindus, who believe in caste and religion, mixed ma create many problems. The main difficulty is the ine estrangement from one's own family and caste. It goes w

saying that a woman accustomed to different manners, habits and social attitudes can fit into an Indian family as happily as salt combines with milk! For this reason, my view has been that whatever personal happiness the parties may find in such marriages, they can only create unhappiness for the families. I have known of European women who, after marrying Indians, have left them to return to Europe. Their complaints have been mostly about family friction and social customs. I also know of some cases where Indians have given up their families and settled down in Europe and thereby managed to save their mixed marriages from disaster.

Tukoji's lady love travelled with us only up to Port Said. Perhaps she disembarked midway to avoid scandalizing people in India by arriving in his company.

Our voyage was fairly pleasant. K. K. Pillai was an excellent cook and occasionally produced some delicacies for the benefit of the Nehru family and myself. All of us delighted in listening to his stories. Pillai's chief pastime was to regale the youthful Kamala Nehru with his reminiscences.

We landed at Colombo. Instead of travelling by rail via Mandapam, I sailed by a steamer from Colombo to Tuticorin and went from there to Quilon and Kavalam. I had only two days to spend at home. On January I reached Jammu and had an interview with the Maharajah. The following day I assumed my duties.

Maharajah Hari Singh of Jammu and Kashmir was then 36 years of age. Dignified and energetic though he was, his pricipal defect was grievance against the world. He did not lack drive or understanding and was imbued with executive ability. Unfortunately he could trust no one.

Even before joining his service, I knew something of the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. During the time of Hari Singh's uncle, Maharajah Pratap Singh, the British were supreme in Kashmir. It was also well-known that the British intervened in Kashmir and deposed Maharajah Pratap Singh as a result of the machinations of his brother (and Hari Singh's father), Amar Singh. Pratap Singh had no heirs and

consequently the next in succession was his nephew, Hari Singh. Unwilling to see the throne go to the latter, Pratap Singh adopted a distant prince, but this was set aside in 1925 and Hari Singh installed in the *gaddi*.

After 35 years of total British control, Kashmir came under Hari Singh's rule, but he knew that although his title was exalted, his powers were greatly limited by the Resident's right to intervene in many important matters. The Europeans assumed special powers in Kashmir which they did not exercise in other States. Because of the fine climate and natural beauty of Kashmir, large numbers of Europeans used to go there every year. Not only did they have little respect for the Maharajah, but went to the extent of defying his authority. Hari Singh's one ambition was to regain his sovereignty. His aim was to reduce the powers and privileges of the Europeans and to stop the Resident's interference in internal affairs, thus improving the status of his kingdom.

Two things stood in the way of his ambition. One was his own background; the other was the dominance of Muslims in the State. The background of course was the notorious 'Mr A' case. A few years before assuming his *gaddi*, Hari Singh made a journey to England. A gang of criminals in London plotted to defraud him of vast sums of money. The leader of the plot was a lawyer named Hobbs and he was abetted by an Englishman named Captain Arthur who was the Maharajah's A.D.C. The plot was to involve the young prince in a compromising situation with some woman and to blackmail him. The woman they used was Mrs Robinson. Captain Arthur helped to introduce her to Hari Singh as a rich widow. The prince was enamoured of her and set out for Paris in her company. There he was surprised in a hotel by Montague Newton, the head of the gang, who pretended to be Mrs Robinson's husband and the gang blackmailed him to the tune of 45 lakhs of rupees. When the theives fell out, the plot was exposed and in 1924 it formed the basis of a law suit. The British government directed that the Maharajah should be spared publicity and thus the victim was referred

to as 'Mr A' throughout the proceedings. But as the details of the story leaked out, the world's curosity was excited. For days the case captured the headlines in newspapers of many countries, because of the huge amount involved, the skill of the conspirators, and the possible identity of the victim. Everywhere people asked: who is Mr A? In France and America the papers got at the truth and revealed the name, but in England and India, the papers obeyed the government's directions and did not reveal his identity. Consequently wild rumours circulated and many prominent people were suspected. Ultimately the government itself came out with the statement that the heir apparent of Kashmir, Raja Hari Singh was Mr A. Newspapers all over the world chronicled his youthful indiscretion and the prince could not get over the disgrace. As a result of this experience, he developed a permanent 'chip on his shoulder', and distrusted everyone.

The second factor was political. Hari Singh was the ruler of a kingdom made up of two States, Jammu and Kashmir. The ruling family belonged to Jammu. The founder of the dynasty, Gulab Singh (Hari Singh's great grandfather) started life as a retainer of the ruler of Lahore, Ranjit Singh and by various devices captured first Jammu and then Kashmir. 95 per cent of the population of Kashmir are Muslims. The ruling Maharajah is not only a Hindu, but belonged to distinctly separate Jammu. Most of the officials were Hindus. All powers were confined to people of Jammu origin. When it became apparent that the Maharajah was antipathetic to Europeans, Muslims and Europeans joined forces.

The Maharajah's principal advisers at that time were three in number. These three ministers were Sir Albion Banerji, in charge of external affairs, Pyari Krishna Vattal, in charge of internal affairs and works minister, G.E.C. Wakefield. Banerji was a seasoned administrator who had a good record as Dewan of Mysore and Cochin. In political matters he had uncommon grasp and extreme competence. Pyari Krishna Vattal was an officer of the Indian Audit Service. Although he was able and well-versed in secretariat work, he was apt to be

jealous and scheming. He could not tolerate anyone else approaching the Maharajah. Wakefield may be described as an illiterate European. He was proof of the theory that Europeans who serve Indian princes usually display the defects of both races. He gained favour with the Maharajah as manager of the royal lands. After observing his conduct for some time, I wrote a satiric poem of five stanzas in Malayalam entitled 'The Courtier'.

From the beginning, the Maharajah was prejudiced against Banerji by the combined intrigues of Vattal and Wakefield. Banerji rarely even obtained an audience with the Maharajah and was mainly entrusted with duties carrying no authority. Although Vattal and Wakefield were rivals, they co-operated in estranging Banerji from the prince. In details of administration, only Vattal had the requisite experience and knowledge.

In this trinity, my position was that of assistant to Vattal. But I had occasion to work in association with all three of them. They were all more or less satisfied with my work. My specific duty was to prepare a report on the constitutional rights of the Maharajah after making full investigation and collecting all requisite data. I have mentioned earlier that the Secretary of State for India had appointed a Committee underthe chairmanship of Sir Harcourt Butler to determine the rights and privileges of the Indian princely States. All the princely States were at this time preparing to argue their claims before the Committee.

In addition, the Chamber of Princes had set up an expert committee under Colonel Haksar to present arguments on points of common interest. As counsel for the princes, a famous lawyer had been brought down from England. Sir Leslie Scott had formerly been law minister under the British Crown and was eminently fitted for this role. He was paid a fee of 15 lakh rupees by the Princes' Chamber. The Maharajah of Kashmir was a member of the Chamber Committee and he was accordingly keenly interested in the work connected with the Butler Committee. Vattal had made him believe that the lost privileges of the Indian States could be regained through the Butler Committee.

The Committee was due to visit Kashmir in April and I was ordered to have all my reports ready by that time. Banerji, Wakefield, Vattal and I were appointed as a committee to prepare these. By the end of March my reports were ready. Although they were largely my own handiwork, it must be said that since I was new to this work, I received considerable help from Vattal in their preparation. The Maharajah was very impressed by my reports and he decided that I should be present in England when the Butler Committee continued their deliberations.

The Butler Committee visited Kashmir in April. Kashmir is always beautiful but at the end of April, when summer begins, one may assert that the world has nothing lovelier to offer. This valley, seventy miles long and seven miles wide, is surrounded by high mountain peaks. The entrance to Kashmir is a narrow pass. Scientists say that long ago Kashmir was a lake and what we see today is the bed of the old lake. Anyway, the prospect as one enters the valley through Baramula Pass is dazzling. An almost level terrain with a curved wall of snow-clad mountains enclosing it, with the River Jhelum flowing in the middle, the Dal Lake fringed with lilies and gardens, the profusion of flowers whose scents and colours are unique, the saffron fields that spread like jewelled carpets on all sides. It is impossible to say in words how lovely Kashmir is in early summer. The snow has not completely melted from the lower slopes of the surrounding mountains and the perpetual snows of the mountain tops glow in radiant colours at dawn and dusk as if touched by a magician's wand. In the parks of Srinagar the almond flowers scattered on the green are like diamonds on an emerald background. The pleasure-loving Mugal emperors used to come to Kashmir in early summer. Jehangir, enraptured by its pristine beauty, developed two gardens in Srinagar which still remain to compete with nature's own loveliness.

The Maharajah decided to receive the Butler Committee in Srinagar itself. Accordingly, the three ministers went there two days in advance. I was also sent by the Maharajah to

argue certain important points on behalf of Kashmir during the discussions with the Committee. My arguments appealed to Sir Leslie Scott and he commended them to the Maharajah before the Committee itself. Scott pressed for my inclusion in the expert committee of the Chamber to discuss points of common interest with all the States. But the Maharajah replied that he was willing to depute me to London to assist him for the present but he was not willing to lend my services to the expert committee.

Accordingly in May 1928 I journeyed again to London. My previous stay there for many years was as a student and as a journalist. In that capacity one's contacts with people in the seats of power are remote. However this time my journey was different. Since the Maharajah had made liberal arrangements for the trip, I had no financial cares. In the same way, I was brought into close contact with men in high positions.

A week after our arrival, other state ministers including Colonel Haksar also arrived. Apart from briefing Sir Leslie Scott about Kashmir affairs, Haksar had entrusted me with the task of writing a history of the development and present condition of the Indian States. The early historical section of the book *British Crown and the Indian States*[1] came to be written in this way. The second part of the book dealt with finance and was written by a scholar named Mrs Austin Robinson. Sir Leslie Scott's legal arguments before the Butler Committee were based on this work of ours. The book had to be completed in fifteen days. I used to send each chapter to Colonel Haksar immediately it was completed. After receiving the first four or five chapters, I was delighted to get a telegram from Haksar, 'You are a wizard.'

None of us felt that Leslie Scott's arguments would help to establish the rights of the Indian States. He used to mix up the affairs of princes ranging from the Nizam of Hyderabad at one end to the mini-monarchs of tiny principalities. After his arguments lasting for a month and a half, the Committee left to prepare its report. I returned to India.

I disembarked in Bombay on 9 December 1928. Learning

that my middle uncle was very ill, I left Bombay immediately for Kavalam, but was not fortunate enough to see him before he died. When I reached home, he had been dead two days.

Of my three uncles, the youngest, Sri Govinda Panikkar, died early during my student days in England. I was extremely unhappy at my absence from the death-bed of this uncle too, who was also my wife's father. I had a special esteem for this shrewd and utterly good man and he in turn had a special affection for me. To my eldest uncle, he was as serviceable as a right-hand, and the former never used to take any decisions without consulting the latter and getting his approval on all important matters. Fair-minded, unaggressive and compassionate, he could not brook evil and was highly respected by our community. Uncle never liked to move out of the house, nor did he ever enter a court of law as a litigant or as a witness. He never had truck with officialdom.

It is hard to describe the tie of affection that bound the three brothers to one another. They never had any disagreement or dispute in their lives. The death of this surviving brother was a severe blow to my eldest uncle, the head of our family.

As soon as the obsequies were over, I had to go back to Jammu. Proposals were under way to bring sweeping changes in Kashmir. The struggle between Banerji and Vattal had reached its climax and Banerji was almost without standing. The Maharajah had decided to terminate his services and Banerji had decided to leave. The date of his departure was fixed for the month of March. But before he left a slight misunderstanding occurred between us.

Banerji, who was minister for external affairs, was required to get the Maharajah's prior approval before he sent any letters to the British Resident. The Maharajah had ordered Banerji to draft a letter dealing comprehensively with certain powers the Resident claimed over Kashmir. Banerji drafted a long and well argued letter and sent it for the Maharajah's approval. The Maharajah showed the draft to Colonel Haksar. The latter, with his excessive love for his own draftsmanship, rewrote certain portions. The Maharajah then sent the revised

draft to Banerji who jumped to the conclusion that I was the offender. He submitted a memorandum to the Maharajah in protest. The gist of the memorandum was that he had occupied the position of Chief Minister in two States and had corresponded with the paramount power on numerous subjects of great moment without anyone else having to revise his letters. It fell to me to open this memorandum and show it to the Maharajah.

The Maharajah was greatly annoyed with Banerji and they parted on far from cordial terms. Soon after leaving service, Banerji published an article denouncing the administration of Kashmir and suggesting that the Maharajah was an enemy of the people. The seeds of the revolt that occurred next year in Kashmir could be seen in this article.

I spent the spring of that year in Srinagar. My residence was in the Valley beside the Shankaracharya temple near the Dal Lake. The glories of nature are at their height in Kashmir. The marvellous play of light on its hillsides, rivers and lakes with their ever changing hues is something that no words can adequately describe. The profusion of flowers in the valley of Kashmir gives the region the elegance of an intricately woven Persian carpet. There is practically no fruit or flower that you cannot find in Kashmir.

Hearing of the attractions and amenities of Kashmir, people flock in large numbers to this State every spring. There is a department of government entrusted with their care. The majority of the tourists lived in tents. Some preferred to live in house-boats, which because of their commodious equipment and mobility, were most in demand.

While the State was so entrancing, I doubt if there are such indigent people anywhere on earth. The men and women famed for their beauty are steeped in poverty. There is no question that such poverty in such a potentially rich land is the result of maladministration.

After Banerji's departure, the Maharajah decided to introduce some administrative reforms in the State. In the course of these he decided to appoint me State Secretary, but before

these reforms were put through, I had to leave service in Kashmir for another appointment. I did not wish to leave Kashmir, and the Maharajah was pleased with me. By every token, my friends and I had taken it for granted that Kashmir would become my permanent home. But fate has its inscrutable turns. The wheels of politics caught me in their swift motion and deposited me in Delhi.

In December 1929, Calcutta University invited me to deliver a course of six lectures on Indian history. This was a signal honour. With the approval of the Maharajah, I carried out this task and had just returned when I received orders to go to Delhi. I jumped into the centre of the political whirlpool. This needs some explanation.

I have referred earlier to the Simon Commission constituted by Parliament to study the issue of constitutional reforms for India. When Indians boycotted this Commission, the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, decided that the co-operation of Indians must be obtained in some other way to ensure the success of such reforms. The result of his consultations with the authorities was the first Round Table Conference called by the British government. The object of the Conference was to devise an independent constitution for India from the combined deliberations of representatives of the British parliament, British India and the Indian States. When after his return from England Lord Irwin sounded the Maharajah of Patiala, Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, on this subject, the princes also agreed to participate in the Conference.

The princes immediately started consultations. What should be their stand in the London Conference? How should they face the consitututional reforms in British India? What programme of action could they adopt to assist British India without prejudice to their own rights and privileges? All these matters called for careful consideration. The Maharajah of Patiala, Chancellor of the Princes' Chamber and other Maharajahs regarded the Conference as an opportunity to reaffirm the influence of the Indian princes.

Their first decision was to constitute an Expert Committee

to advise the princes on these points. Colonel Haksar was appointed Director of this committee. I was appointed its deputy chief. I have already published some books on the Round Table Conference and resulting reforms and hence wish to refer to them only briefly. My primary task in Delhi was to study and ascertain how the possible constitutional changes would affect the Indian States. It was arranged that the representatives of the Indian States should have an informal meeting with the Viceroy before going to London. In drawing up the agenda for this meeting, I had suggested that it would be advantageous to the States if the new constitution were federal in structure.

Two days before the meeting with the Viceroy, the Maharajahs and Prime Ministers conferred in Simla to consider my draft agenda and finalize it. The gathering included the Chancellor, the Maharajah of Patiala and the rulers of Bikaner, Kashmir, Bhopal, Alwar, Dholpur as well as Ministers like Sir Akbar Hydari, Sir Manubhai Mehta and Sir Mirza Ismail. Although their final decisions were along the lines of the agenda prepared by Haksar and myself, they were strongly opposed to the principle of federation. This was a great disappointment to me. Right from my student days at Oxford I was always of the view that only a federal constitution would suit India, especially the Indian States. As early as January 1919, I published an article in *The Modern Review* propounding this view. Also in my book on the Indian States published in 1927 I tried to commend the federal principle for various reasons. Obviously therefore I was deeply dejected and depressed when the princes and ministers unanimously rejected my advice. However, without giving up in despair, I decided to write a book on federal India to justify my views and to persuade the princes of the advantages of a federation. Having been appointed secretary of the princes' delegation to the Round Table Conference, I had to leave for England by the first of September. Although it was not easy to write a book on so complicated a subject in a bare month and a half, I resolved to make an attempt. I finished my first draft in one month. On so

momentous an issue, I fully understood that the princes would not accept the views of an unknown and obscure young man. I felt that Colonel Haksar's blessing was essential to my success. Accordingly, I sent my draft to Haksar for his perusal. Two days after the typescript reached Simla he sent me a telegram asking me to come there. I went to Simla anxious to know his reaction. As soon as he saw me, he said: 'The book is excellent and opportune. If you wish to publish it with my name added, I have no objection.' 'To reinforce your opinions, I have made some changes here and there', he added, after a little reflection.

This was in response to the suggestion in my letter that it would be proper to publish the book in our joint names. Nothing was more pleasing to me. I was certain that a book with Haksar and myself as joint authors would be respected not only in the Indian States but also by the British authorities. I was emboldened to think that the book would help to remove the opposition among the princes to federation. The next day I sent the typescript by air to London for publication.

I reached London in September. There is no need for me to recount the story of the Round Table Conference. As the secretary of the princes' delegation, I too had a minor part in these deliberations. I derived in addition an opportunity to get to know at closer quarters many Indian leaders like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr Srinivasa Sastri, Mr Jinnah, Sir Mohamed Zafrullah and others. I also gained the acquaintance and friendship of British parliamentarians such as Sir Samuel Hoare (later Lord Templewood), Lord Sankey, Isaac Foot and others.

Federal India[2] came out on the day the Conference opened. It would be correct to say that the book almost created commotion. The British authorities interpreted the book's arguments as an indication of the princes' attitude. This angered certain princes and their advisers who had come prepared to obstruct the claim for Indian independence at any cost. Their wrath was specially directed towards me. The foremost among them was the ruler of Navanagar, the Maharajah Jam

Ranjit Singh. I came to feel the adverse consequences of his enmity two years later.

I returned to India early in January 1931. At the next session of the Chamber of Princes, I was appointed secretary. My appointment was not without some dissent among the princes. People like the Jam Saheb objected that I was a radical and had on many occasions expressed views against the unlimited authority of the princes. The then Chancellor, the Maharajah of Patiala—although not very well-known to me—insisted on my appointment and flatly refused to approve any other choice. I infer that this was due to Haksar's pressure. Anyway, the Maharajah of Patiala won his point. In February 1931 I was appointed secretary to the Chamber of Princes.

Since a considerable part of my later life was spent as a minister of the Maharajah of Patiala, it will be appropriate if I gave some details about him here. Maharajah Bhupendra Singh of Patiala was a veritable Duryodhana among princes. A huge figure of a man, handsome and commanding in presence, he was an admirable example of Punjabi manhood. Six foot two in height, toughened by exercise, an elaborately arranged beard, a dignified but pleasant face, eyes glittering with determination, such was his outward appearance. The divided and twisted beard gave his face the semblance of a Kathakali make-up. Once a European told me at a Princes' Chamber gathering that beside him other Maharajahs looked like rustics. Such was his regal presence.

Bhupendra Singh used to wear jewels daily. Nobody has ever seen him without his two elaborate ear rings. On his wrist he always sported a priceless bracelet of many gems. All his coat buttons were studded with flawless diamonds. He did not hesitate to appear in court with all the traditional regalia. He lived up to the promise of his apparel. He never set out on any journey without a horde of retainers, assistants and ladies. The poet's description of Duryodhana—'in looks and *hauteur* the equal of Indra'—might have been written of Bhupendra Singh.

Although in looks he resembled the prince of the Kauravas,

At this time there was a great argument going on between the Viceroy and prominent members of the Chamber of Princes. The princes split into two camps and each of these started mustering strength and holding imposing conferences. All of us knew that the Maharajah of Patiala wished to regain the chancellorship. Because of his influence among the princes, the Nawab of Bhopal and his group were not able to oppose him. It was obvious that the split among the princes was weakening the position of the princes at the second Round Table Conference held that year. This was the time when I chanced to meet the Prime Minister of Patiala, Nawab Sir Liaquat Hayat in London. As a result of our discussions, a joint conference of the princes and ministers of both camps was held immediately on our return from England. The main decision of the Conference was that a committee of umpires should mediate between the rival groups of princes and some ministers were named to this committee. The Chairman of the Committee was Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar and its members were Sir Akbar Hydari, Colonel Haksar, Sir Manubhai Mehta, Sir Liaquat Hayat, the Yuvaraja of Libidi and myself. The terms of the famous Delhi Pact which re-established princely unity were drafted by Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar and myself.

The immediate consequence of this Pact was that a Maharàjah from outside the two groups was elected Chancellor. The Jamsaheb of Nawanagar, Ranjit Singh, was the nominee. The Jamsaheb was renowned as one of the greatest cricketers of his day and was an Anglophile of the deepest dye. But for his loyalty to the British, the head of such a small State could not have risen to such prominence. He was happiest when living in England. One of his favourite ploys was to win over other princes using the bait of his supposed influence in England. The principal adviser of the Jamsaheb at that time was Rushbrook Williams. Williams came out to India as a Professor of History and later served as chief of British Intelligence in India. He was an opponent of the Indian freedom movement and conducted anti-Indian propaganda in America. His other activity was to curry favour with the

Indian princes and rally them to the side of the government. After carrying on with this for a while, this arch-intriguer established himself as adviser to the Jamsaheb.

Rushbrook Williams was extremely hostile to me. Perhaps his motive may have been the knowledge that I was a supporter of the independence movement and would try to take the princes out of the British camp. Anyway, he was ever alert in working against me. Unfortunately, Haksar whom I had considered my chief ally, withdrew from the Princes' Chamber and returned to Gwalior. It was at this period, when I lacked influential support, that my struggle with Williams developed. Less than a month after becoming Chancellor, the Jamsaheb left for England with Williams. I realized early enough that the Jamsaheb, always pro-British, would, under the guidance of this new adviser, be in head-on conflict with me.

The Chancellor, while in London, started doing various things under Rushbrook Williams' advice prejudicial to the Indian independence movement. The working committee of the Chamber of Princes passed resolutions opposing these and sent me to London to see that the Jamsaheb's unauthorized activities were stopped. As the third Round Table Conference was to meet in London in October of that year, I was also deputed to attend to work in that connection.

My differences with the Jamsaheb came to a head during this London visit. Williams apparently told the Jamsaheb that the working committee of the Chamber of Princes had repudiated his views at my instance. Anyway, the secretary and the Chancellor were not only at daggers drawn but no longer spoke to each other. The Jamsaheb's ire was also roused by the fact that I circulated a few notes to the cabinet contradicting some of his views.

I returned to India by Christmas. The Jamsaheb also came home in January. Although I went to Jamnagar twice at his request, his hostility to me showed no abatement. On the other hand, I came to understand that he was responsible for some serious misapprehensions being created in the highest circles in Delhi about me. I was the editor of

Swarajya in Madras during the governorship there of the present Viceroy, Lord Willingdon. I had at the time occasion to attack him more than once. After his return to India as Viceroy, he referred jokingly to me once or twice about this, thereby showing it had not been forgotten. Williams, who knew the background, worked on Lady Willingdon to rake up this old trouble. Moreover, the Jamsaheb and Lord Willingdon were old friends. The former convinced the latter that as long as I remained secretary of the Chamber, there would be no accord with the princes. I came to know of this from C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar who was at the time in Delhi representing Travancore. All told, it was clear that the Jamsaheb's wrath would be quenched only by my dismissal.

The annual conference of the Chamber of Princes was scheduled for the end of March. Four or five days before the conference the Jamsaheb sent a confidential circular to the members of the working committee proposing my immediate removal from my post. The Jamsaheb planned to accomplish this at the meeting which was to approve the Chamber's budget. I had only a rough idea of what was afoot. The jubilation of my enemies and their secret confabulations indicated that some plot had been hatched. It was curious to see several past enemies come together in this pleasant exercise. Rushbrook Williams, Maqbul Mohammed and D. Madhava Rao, who were not even on speaking terms, came together in the hope that this was the right moment to destroy me. Although the conjunction of these three evil planets did give me some apprehension, I gave no outward sign of this in my conduct. During those few days, I had no support at all. Haksar was in Gwalior nursing some grievance against the Chamber. Krishnamachari did not come at all from Baroda. The Maharajahs of Patiala, Bikaner and others who were friendly to me appeared for some reason to have temporarily deserted me. In the end I resigned myself to facing whatever might come.

Although the working committee met several times, several members used to leave on some excuse or other immediately

the budget was taken up and accordingly the Jamsaheb was unable to take up my dismissal for three or four days. He got wind that there was some stratagem behind this and in his annoyance sought the help of the Maharajah of Panna, Yadavendra Singh. Although this prince had nothing against me, he fell in with the Jamsaheb's wishes and canvassed the working committee members individually seeking my dismissal at the next meeting on the plea that otherwise the Jamsaheb would be disgraced. They agreed. When the budget was next taken up, the Nawab of Bhopal was absent with a toothache, the Maharajah of Bikaner with a stomach upset and the Maharajah of Cutch on some urgent business. Of the major princes, only the Maharajah of Patiala was present. He came to me in the next room and explained the position to me. Afterwards he also agreed to the budget being reduced by the elimination of my post. This took place on 28 March. The effect of this decision was to terminate my employment on 1 April.

The election of the new Chancellor took place on 29 March. The Maharajah of Patiala was elected with a sweeping majority. In the Chamber, my official seat was just in front of his. When I turned round to congratulate him he signalled to me to come outside and rose. I followed him. Before I could say a word he said with the utmost affection: 'I have reappointed you Secretary of the Chamber. At the meeting of the new executive this afternoon, the earlier resolution will be revoked. But don't tell any one just now.'

When the Chamber dispersed for lunch, the Maharajah of Bikaner caught me. He wanted me to join Bikaner as a minister as soon as I left the Chamber. I tried to put him off by saying that my plans were still unsettled and I could not decide anything without consulting my brother. I was not at the time inclined to go to Bikaner. I wanted to continue as secretary of the Chamber so as to enjoy the discomfiture of my enemies. The Maharajah of Patiala, shrewd psychologist that he was, guessed as much and accordingly anticipated my desire by his announcement. At the moment I did not

appreciate his motives. His stratagem was not to allow me to go to Bikaner but to draw me ultimately to Patiala and the offer to continue me as secretary of the Chamber was only a means to this end.

At 4 p.m. on 29 March the new executive of the Chamber met at Bikaner Palace. A little before the meeting, the Maharajah of Patiala called me out and asked me to be ready to leave for London to present the case for the Princes at the forthcoming plenary session of the Round Table Conference. It was then that I apprised him of the offer from Bikaner. He replied that it was not possible for me to accept and that as long as he lived, he would not agree to my serving another person and that I should have no fears for my future. I accepted his decision gladly and was immediately reappointed secretary.

At 5.30 the same evening, the Jamsaheb of Nawanagar was returning home. I decided to say goodbye to him and went to the railway station. He received me cordially. He said: 'Since we are both relinquishing our offices with the Chamber, there need be no disagreement between us hereafter.' Rushbrook Williams and Sir Prabha Shankar Pattani were with him. As if echoing the Jamsaheb's words, Williams also got up and extended his hand to me. I could not help laughing when I replied: 'Your Highness is right, but while you are no longer the Chancellor, I have again been appointed secretary.' Neither the Jamsaheb nor Williams spoke a word. I suspect there was a smile on Pattani's face.

10

Patiala

When I returned to the Chamber executive meeting after seeing the Jamsaheb off, the meeting was nearly over. The committee's decisions regarding me, taken at the instance of the Maharajah of Patiala, were made in my absence. I was not unsurprised by the attitude of the princes, who had only the previous day voted to terminate my services, in congratulating me today.

The Chancellor ordered me to go to Patiala for further instructions after clearing all routine work of the office. Accordingly I arrived at Patiala by 4 April. I stayed at Moti Bagh Palace as the Maharajah's personal guest. On the second day of my visit, I was in the verandah of the palace, talking with the Maharajah when a telegram was brought to him. After reading it, he handed it to me without speaking. It was a telegram from the new Jamsaheb Digvijay Singh announcing the death of the Jamsaheb Ranjit Singh. The late Jamsaheb was at one time living in exile and worked as A.D.C. to the Maharajah of Patiala. In fact, the Jamsaheb had ascended the *gaddi* because of the support and assistance of the father of Maharajah Bhupendra Singh, the late Rajendra Singh. Bhupendra Singh and the late Jamsaheb had treated each other like brothers. Thus the Jamsaheb's death was a matter of grief to Patiala. After being silent for a while, the Maharajah called his secretary Radha Raman Das and asked him to bring the confidential almanac kept in his bedroom. This almanac had been specially compiled by an astrologer named Lahori Ram at the instance of the Maharajah. It was compiled from mid-April to mid-April, and predicted the major events of the year. The Maharajah kept it in close secrecy in his own bed-chamber. He turned it over once and then

showed me a page. 'The main events of this month are the deaths of two princes in South India and the demise of the Maharajah of Jamnagar.' As a matter of fact, it was in this month that the ex-ruler and current Maharajah of Cochin passed away.

I was astounded by this prediction. Since the year was ending, I sought his permission to look at the forecasts for the remaining days. The almanac predicted another important event for the month. The Badshah of Afghanistan, Nadir Khan, would meet a violent end and his son would peacefully succeed to his throne. I showed this item to the Maharajah. ' Yes, I know ', was all he said. Within a week I saw the news in the papers that Nadir Shah had fallen to an assassin's knife!

Towards the end of April, I left once again for England. This time I had occasion to visit Germany. It was not long after Hitler's coming to power. I reached Berlin with introductions to many prominent people. One of them was to von Papen, then Vice-Chancellor to Hitler. Papen was one of the foremost European statesmen. He was the Chancellor of Germany before Hitler. Papen was very friendly and thanks to him I was able to understand the drift of events in Germany.

On the day of my embarkation for India, I received a cable at Marseilles from the Maharajah of Bikaner. It was to meet him at Bikaner before I returned to Patiala. I went from Bombay to Bikaner with the permission of the Maharajah of Patiala. Since I could guess what the Maharajah wanted, I was able to consult Colonel Haksar in Bombay and take his advice too before leaving for Bikaner. Haksar's advice was that it was better to serve Patiala.

I need not say that this advice was welcome to me. In my struggle in the Chamber of Princes, it was the Maharajah of Patiala who had come to my rescue, unsolicited. He was the man who first offered me a post. Moreover, the Maharajah had assured me that as long as he was the Chancellor, I would continue to be the secretary and handle all its work. This was a matter of self-esteem to me. For this reason, I had

already decided to throw in my lot with Patiala, but I well realized that it would be a mistake to offend so famous and powerful a man as Maharajah Ganga Singh of Bikaner. The gist of what I said, therefore, was: 'I consider it a great honour to serve your Highness; but I am already committed to the Maharajah of Patiala. If and when he permits me, I shall be glad to come to Bikaner.' For the moment, the Maharajah had to be content with this.

The Maharajah of Patiala was at the time camping in his summer resort of Chail. This place is a hill resort in the Himalaya. The main palace called Eagle's Nest was located on a 7000-foot peak. This delightful town was set in the middle of pine and deodar forests, with snow-bound peaks on three sides. In its natural beauty it rivalled the fabled Alakapuri. The town consisted only of the palace and its attendant gardens and ancillary buildings. Entry was restricted. Apart from the residences of the Maharajah and his wives, there were houses for the ladies of the court and some main officials as also tennis courts and cricket grounds and guest houses. The Maharajah used to boast that his capital was higher than neighbouring Simla.

On reaching Chail, I reported my talks with Bikaner to the Maharajah. Soon afterwards, on 1 September 1933, he appointed me a minister concurrently with my position as secretary of the Chamber.

I was invited by Madras University to deliver six lectures on the law relating to the Indian States. After this engagement in Madras, I went home for a week. It was at the end of this visit that I returned to Patiala to take up my new appointment. The Maharajah appointed me his Foreign Minister.

Maharajah Bhupendra Singh died on 23 March 1938. I had served him for five years. In all that time, he never had occasion to show annoyance, distrust or dissatisfaction with me. Nor do I remember ever experiencing any unhappiness about my work. It would be correct to say that his affection for and confidence in me were beyond measure. I in turn recipro-

cated with an equal degree of respect and affection for him. Even while serving in Patiala as minister, I had occasion to take political action contrary to his views. In regard to the subject of federation, for instance, we differed. I was a protagonist of federalism and continued to work for it. The Maharajah opposed federation and was a supporter of all moves to counter it. Although we were thus working in opposite directions, he not only reposed the utmost confidence in me, but always accepted and carried out my advice in official matters. I represented him at all meetings concerned with federation. His allies, the Maharajahs of Dholpur and Panna, also opponents of federation, resented my position. They pressed the Maharajah singly and jointly to remove me from my post. But he never gave in.

To be Foreign Minister to Maharajah Bhupendra Singh was not an easy task. He clashed with many powerful figures for various reasons. Because of his opposition to federalism, he started secret negotiations with people like Churchill and this antagonized the Secretary of State, Sir Samuel Hoare. He was not only at loggerheads with the Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, over matters relating to cricket, but also fell foul of the Viceroy's wife, the assertive Lady Willingdon. Between the Maharajah and the Resident, Sir Harold Wilberforce Bell, there was a regular vendetta and the latter was determined to see the Maharajah deposed. He quarrelled with many princes in the same way. In short, the Maharajah was in some respects like Ravana, whose ten heads and twenty hands pursued contradictory or at any rate incongruous aims. He was connected with many institutions—Chamber of Princes, Cricket Association, Gun Dog League, Freemasonry, Indian Olympics. Everywhere he was accustomed to having his way. Although he had special advisers to deal with each, the overall supervision fell to me. By the end of one year, the Maharajah was completely satisfied with my performance as his Foreign Minister and at the Navaratri Durbar in 1934, he conferred several honours and titles on me.

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Maharajah of Patiala was invited to take part in the celebrations. The 1935 India Bill was at the time before Parliament and there was work to be done to safeguard the interests of the Indian States. Manubhai Mehta and I were deputed by the Chamber of Princes for this purpose. I sailed from Bombay eight days before the Maharajah. Some members of his retinue accompanied me. The most interesting of them was my friend, Sirdar Mohamed Yusuf Khan, a prince from Afghanistan.

Yusuf Khan was in truth the rightful heir to the Afghan throne. But when he was only eighteen, Abdul Rahman who was below him in the line of succession seized power and expelled the senior branch of the royal family. The youthful Yusuf did hold out against Abdul Rahman for a time, first in Kabul and later in Kandahar, before he had to retire in the face of the prowess of Rahman, who later achieved world-wide renown. Thus, fifty years ago, Yusuf and a few retainers fled to India. At the time we travelled together, Yusuf Khan was not less than 75 years in age. Yet neither physically nor intellectually did he show any signs of decline. He lacked neither the power nor the inclination to dare or do anything.

All the bigger Indian princes treated Yusuf as a family head. Although he in turn was friendly with them all, he never forgot his lineage. Any disrespect, true or imagined, to his imperial birth, was enough to make him draw sword or gun. He treated the Viceroy or the Maharajah or the servant in the same manner. The stories one can tell about Yusuf Khan are endless. One or two incidents may be cited here. At the time that King Amanullah and the British had fallen out, the latter tried to incite revolt in Afghanistan and to set up an irredentist party. The British offered to support Yusuf Khan if he laid claim to the Afghan throne and organized an invasion. Yusuf replied that while he desired to regain his throne, it was beneath his dignity to go to Afghanistan as a British stooge. The second story goes one better. In 1928 Amanullah went to Europe and invited Yusuf Khan to accompany him. Yusuf replied that he was also travelling to Europe

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that year but it was hardly in keeping with his status to travel with the usurper of his country.

As Yusuf Khan did not know any English, I felt it a grave responsibility to escort him to Europe. We travelled by an Italian steamer and disembarked at Naples from where we went straight to Rome. Within a week the Maharajah and his party arrived in Rome. The Italian government accorded princely honours to the Maharajah. As his Minister, I had the opportunity to meet the King of Italy, the Pope and Mussolini.

I went with the Maharajah to the audience with King Victor Emanuel. He was a small and unimpressive figure, living in the shadow of Mussolini. He talked to us for some time about various subjects and presented the Maharajah with an insignia. Needless to say, the interview with Mussolini was more interesting. One of his secretaries, Consul Scarpa, was a friend of mine and it was through Scarpa that I received an invitation, after the Maharajah's own interview, to meet Mussolini. The interview was at the Palazzio Venezia, one time property of the kingdom of Venice and symbol of its ancient wealth and maritime primacy. The palace was full of precious carpets and paintings.

The Maharajah had a forty-minute interview with Mussolini. During this time I was waiting in the ante-chamber, and thinking of the astonishing life story of this man who rose from a smithy through trade union leadership to seize the reins of government and hold the entire world to ransom. Undoubtedly an extraordinary man. Already he had quarrelled with the British and was competing with the French. Yet at that time, in 1935, no one attempted to challenge Mussolini. From an ordinary State, he had already lifted Italy to the status of a great power, and he boasted an army of six million. Even at the time I mused about Mussolini's future. That was the time of Hitler's meteoric rise in Germany. In England and elsewhere, opinion was hardening against Italy and demanding a curb on it. Mussolini's future was even then a question mark.

However, in 1935, Mussolini was accepted as one of the world's great personalities. I therefore considered it my good

fortune to have this opportunity to meet him personally. I was called in after the Maharajah's interview. An aide took me to the door and ushered me in. I could see Mussolini sitting behind a large table at the far end of a very big room. The Maharajah was sitting across the table. There were no pictures on the walls and no carpets on the floor. It was a walk of seventy feet from the door to where Mussolini sat. As soon as I entered, he got up from his chair. When he gravely stood up, I still had another sixty feet to traverse, which made me a little nervous. However, the thought that the Maharajah was watching me helped to summon courage and I walked on to the table. Mussolini shook hands pleasantly and then talked to me for nearly half an hour on various matters.

Our audience with the Pope was two days later. I had seen the Vatican Palace more than once before. The priceless sculpture of the palace is deservedly famous. The Maharajah and Maharani wished to pay their respects to the pontiff. The Principal Secretary to the Pope at that time was Cardinal Bacelli, who later ascended the throne of St Peter in his turn. I conferred with the Cardinal about the arrangements. The Maharajah, Maharani, Nawab Sir Liaquat and I went to the Vatican together. Their Highnesses were admitted first and spoke to the Pope for nearly fifteen minutes. It was afterwards that I was admitted to the holy presence. After accepting my expressions of respect, the Pope graciously indicated his knowledge of my continued use of the Vatican library. When I informed him that I was seeking data on the mission of the great Father Nobili, he was pleased. When I took leave, he raised his hand and blessed me in Latin and English.

I was greatly attracted by the Holy Father's serenity. It became evident to one that he was fully endowed with divine grace. His face radiated boundless compassion and a calm founded on godliness. This gave his presence an aura worthy of the head of a world religion. Although I was able to see him barely for five minutes, I consider that occasion even now as one of the high points of my life.

The Maharajah and party had decided to tour other cit

in Italy, but because of my urgent duties in connection with the India Bill, I left for London immediately after our visit to Rome. My mission was to secure amendments to the India Bill for protecting the interests of the Indian princes. I had to study every section dealing with the Indian States carefully and to plead before the Secretary of State for any amendments that were vitally necessary. This task was entrusted to me and later to Dhiren Sen, Dewan of Cooch Behar. We were advised by the famous jurist, Sir Wilfred Green. When I say that after three months work we were able to secure changes in nearly forty sections of the Bill, the enormity of our efforts can be estimated. The King's jubliee celebrations were going on at this time. While I was able to join these, the Maharajah's unexpected heart attack led to my recall. His physicians apprehended that the attack would lead to his death. However, the Maharajah continued to take full interest in affairs of state.

October 1935 was the beginning of a crisis in the Maharajah's life. The Resident, Wilberforce Bell, his sworn enemy, was determined to see him deposed. The Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, was also displeased with him. The actions of certain newspaper editors considered as partisans of the Maharajah added fuel to this feud. Lord Willingdon was told by some people that the articles in *The Morning Post* of London and *The National Call* and *The Hindustan Times* of Delhi attacking him were published with the knowledge and connivance of the Maharajah. The cartoons of the Travancore-born and already acclaimed Shankar Pillai were another aggravating factor. They tended to jar exposed nerves. The Viceroy suspected the Maharajah's hand in all these. All told, many prominent people in India and England were the Maharajah's enemies at the time.

When the struggle between the Maharajah and the Resident came to a head, the Dewan, Sir Liaquat Hayat, fell ill and went on leave. Sir Liaquat was a trusted lieutenant of the Maharajah and was in addition a man with considerable influence in British government circles. His absence on leave was another

piece of ill luck. Yet a new difficulty arose. The Maharajah had decided some time earlier to replace the Finance Minister, Sir Frederick Gauntlet, with a man called Colonel Van Ellis. As soon as he learned of this, Gauntlet prepared a note abusing the Maharajah and charging that the State would never progress as long as he ruled and sent it to the Viceroy through the Maharajah's enemy, the Resident. It was true that the Maharajah was extravagant and his lavishness was a source of weakness to the State. But in the last six years, he had not incurred any expenditure contrary to expert advice. In view of this, the despatch of such a confidential note by his own Finance Minister was certainly mean and disloyal. Since Gauntlet was a retired officer of the British government it was safe to assume that the Viceroy would be influenced by his views.

These events led us to fear that the Maharajah might even be forced to abdicate. However, the Maharajah himself had no such fear. At my instance, he decided to take the advice of some leading figures in British India. As a result, he came to the conclusion that a trusted emissary should be despatched to make representations to the Secretary of State and if necessary even at higher levels. I was deputed to do this.

As soon as I reached London, I sought ways to set the Maharajah's record right. The authorities there were greatly prejudiced against him. Gauntlet's note had by then reached the India Office and even those friendly with me raised the subject of his extravagance and his anti-federation activities. It is not possible to explain here how we tried to convert the Secretary of State and his advisers. Suffice it to say that I was helped in this by Sir Samuel Hoare, the former Viceroy, Lord Halifax, and Sir Michael O'Dwyer. Due to their intervention at the interview I had with the Secretary of State, he assured me that no immediate action would be taken against the Maharajah. I considered this a great achievement.

I returned to India gratified at the complete success of my mission. I may claim that the Maharajah's regard and confidence in me increased. As the Resident's powerlessness was exposed, the confusion in the State ended. Not only did

the Maharajah establish cordial relations with the new Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, but the other princes came to rely more and more on his wisdom and statesmanship. Consequently, he was made Chairman of the Committee of Princes chosen to take decisions regarding federation.

Because Sir Liaquat was still on leave, all the responsibilities in this regard fell on me. When the report of the committee was sent to the government, everyone congratulated me. The Maharajah also took pleasure in this. I may quote from a letter written to me by Justice Waddams, the American jurist and adviser to the Chamber of Princes:

> In looking back at the beginnings when we were conferring in London and to work which has been done since, I must add my congratulations to the many which you have received on the results so far achieved. Your prophecy has been fulfilled and your statesmanship justified. In fact, as I review the work which began in Paris even before London and was continued in our early conferences in Patiala and afterwards in the consultations in London and then followed us beginning with the Ministers' Committees in Bombay and other meetings in Bombay, Lahore, Delhi, India is certainly to be congratulated upon your most valuable contribution in the development of the Federal Plan and in your services to the rulers of Indian States.

The Maharajah was elected Chancellor for the tenth time with an overwhelming majority. The first thing he did after the election was to ask me to go to London for the Coronation as his representative. I left for London by a steamer sailing on 24 April. Many friends like Sir Akbar Hydari and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru were in the same ship. In London we found that the Maharajah of Bikaner had arrived for the Coronation. The golden jubilee of his rule was due in October next and I had written a life-sketch of the Maharajah for publication on that date. Both of us wished to get it published by the Oxford University Press. The arrangements for publication were also made in London.

I did not have much work in London on this trip. I occupied myself chiefly with a book on Hindu kingship and

with the finishing touches to my biography of the Maharajah of Bikaner.

A World Exhibition was on in Paris at that time in which most of the great powers participated. Russia, Germany, U.S.A., Britain and others showed keen rivalry in setting up their pavilions. The French government invited Sir Akbar Hydari and me for the formal opening and accordingly both of us spent a week in Paris as the guests of the government.

I returned to India early in July 1937. By then the Maharajah of Patiala was seriously ill. However, he went on with his daily life without regard to his ill health. By January his condition was critical. It became almost impossible for him even to get up from bed. Although the best doctors from France, Germany and Calcutta had come to treat him, he seemed to rely more on *sanyasis* and astrologers. He actually succumbed on 23 March 1936, but from January no one ever expected him to recover. Even on his death-bed, his vigour and power continued to be remarkable. Many princes came to pay courtesy calls. It was the Maharajah who directed their reception. Without his permission, neither doctors nor members of his family could enter his room. Senior officials enquiring about his health used to wait outside. I myself spent many hours every day in the palace. No officials were permitted to see him. Three days before his death, an A.D.C. came and said that the Maharajah was calling for me. When I entered, he was leaning back on a Dewan surrounded by his wives. Although he was not wearing all his usual apparel, even at that time his dress was princely. He wore a chain of pearls like a sacred thread and his ear rings and royal bangles. A wand given to him by a *sanyasin* from Travancore lay close at hand. Although weak, he talked to me for a short while on many matters. I left his chamber in sorrow, aware that this was the last time I would see him alive. He died two days later.

The Maharajah died at seven, soon after dusk. All the chief officials were present in the palace. As the news went round the town, a large crowd assembled at the palace gate. They

spent all night outside awaiting the funeral which was to take place at eight the next morning. The body was bathed and decked in regalia and brought out by his kinsmen on a palanquin. The new Maharajah followed on foot accompanied by officials. The waiting crowd outside broke down and wailed. The soldiers and policemen lining the route were themselves in tears. Of the many hundred thousand people gathered in Patiala that morning, I doubt if any were dry-eyed.

I could understand the ample measure of fear and the respect that Maharajah Bhupendra Singh inspired in his people. He was no doubt devoted to his people, but was equally a stern disciplinarian. A man of outstanding intelligence, he could also be as devious as Chanakya in his dealings. But it can be safely asserted that in generosity, munificence, piety and loyalty to those who served him he had no equal among Indian princes. Pride, authority, courage and a competent grasp of state affairs as well as the arts—these were his qualities. A weakness for women and extravagance were his main failings. But for these, he was a prince among princes.

The Maharajah's death was a great blow to me. I have never grieved so much even at the death of my relations. This was not only because he had a brother's affection for me. For between six and seven years (my life was centred on him. I felt that a chapter of my life had ended with his death. Whatever came hereafter, I was certain that I would never enjoy the same peace of mind or satisfaction in life.

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Literary Interests

The first five years of my life in Patiala were certainly fruitful for my literary work. In Malayalam I was able to compose the poems *Balikamatham*,[1] *Bhupasandesam*[2] and *Chintatarangini*;[3] write the novel, *Kalyana Mul*;[4] produce a work of criticism entitled *Kavita Tattva Nirupanam*[5] and the play, *Bhishma*.[6] In English my literary output included the books *The New Empire*,[7] *Princes in Council*,[8] *Hinduism and the Modern World*,[9] *Biography of the Maharajah of Bikaner*,[10] *Lectures on Interstatal Law*,[11] *Hindu Theories of Kingship*[12] as well as two unpublished novels, *The Pasteboard Paradise* and *A Pinchbeck Hero*. There is no need to deal with the English works here but I believe Malayalis will be interested in the Malayalam books.

Before joining duty in Patiala in 1933, I had spent a vacation at Solan for a month. Among several French books, a prose poem by Pierre Louis, *Chanson de Buitis*, captivated me. I wanted to translate it into Malayalam, but found that its mapping of the heart of a Greek courtesan would not register in Malayalam. The universal aspect of the theme, on the other hand, namely, the female outlook, seemed to me a suitable frame for a poem and *Balikamatham* was the result. There seems to be a general impression that this book is an exercise in eroticism. That is not true. Careful readers will notice that it describes the female mind in four moods: arousal, abandon, ennui and revulsion. True, in the section on 'abandon', stress is placed on the erotic element. But that is characteristic of abandon and it also lends point to the moods of satiety and revulsion. Whatever the reason, this misunderstanding has contributed to a wider circulation of this work.

Most of the other books were written in the midst of my work. From my youth I used to seek relaxation from the strain of official work in literary endeavour. It was during the harassment of battling with the problems created by the India Bill that the novel *Kalyana Mul* was written. One day my eldest daughter Parvati remarked on the lack of novels with an external setting in Malayalam while in Bengali and other languages historical novels based on Indian history were popular. She suggested that I might try a novel set in the Mogul period. I agreed. I thought it would be a welcome relief from the strain of official work and devoted an hour every morning to this project. In this way the novel was finished in two months.

The poem *Chintatarangini* was also composed in a similar crisis. I need not say that the tug of war between the Maharajah and the Resident was a source of worry to me. I started writing these poems simply to escape the worry at least for a brief part of the day. The origin of *Bhishma* was even stranger. I wrote the play during the last illness of the Maharajah in February 1938. Every morning we officials used to go to the palace and spend most of the day there. Even on our return, the thought of the Maharajah's illness used to haunt us. It was as an escape from this that I sought communion with the spirit of Bhishma and the play was actually completed the day before the Maharajah died, on 22 March. I do not recollect having written anything during days of happiness. Such days I used to devote to reading. Let psychologists explain why I could not achieve the concentration needed for authorship when free from strain or worry. I can only place my experience on record.

Whatever the day's burden of work, I always used to find a little time for reading good literature. I considered it a daily duty to renew my acquaintance with the great works of literature, in English or Malayalam. I never made any distinction between the old and the new. Perhaps it may be true to say that in European literature I preferred the modern, but in Malayalam my partiality, if at all, was for older writing.

But I did not neglect the work of moderns like Vallathol, Sankara Kurup, Asan or Changampuzha.

I do not know how far my literary enterprise commended itself to discerning readers. However, comments from people like Appan Thampuran, P. K. Narayana Pillai, Vallathol and Attoor Krishna Pisharodi on *Chintatarangini*, *Kalyana Mul* and *Bhishma* were balm to an author's soul.

I know that some scholars have suspected that *Kalyana Mul* and *Bhishma* are translations. If the assumption is that Malayalis cannot produce original work of merit, what is one to say? Perhaps one should rejoice that the suspicion rests on a high rating of the books. It may be that these critics have been prejudiced by the sordid story of literary counterfeiting whereby works from English, Hindi and other languages are passed off as originals in Malayalam. I must confess that I have not had the leisure or the linguistic skill to go in for wholesale translation.

I have been asked why the play *Bhishma* was framed on classical lines and not written in modern prose. I have nothing against prose plays. In fact, I grant that they are more natural on the stage. But as a branch of literature, the Indian tradition has accepted drama which blends prose with poetry. The dramatic literature of other countries has also won general acclaim as poetry. Leave alone Greek drama, even in European literature, Marlowe, Shakespeare and the rest right down to D'Annunzio have cast their plays in verse. Till recently, only the comedy of manners, styled 'social comedies', came to be written in prose in Europe. It was only after Ibsen that other and more serious types of drama started appearing in prose. However, we should not forget that even today many modern poets write their plays in verse form. Hardy's *Dynasts*, Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, D'Annunzio's *Francisco di Rimini* are examples. The most modern of the moderns, Eliot, also writes plays in verse. I have dealt with all these in the preface to the play *Mandodari*.[13] If the Indian tradition is that drama blend prose and verse and if we judge drama even now as a branch of literature,

I have had to speak of C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar more than once in this book. In my chronicle of the next ten years also I will have to speak of him frequently. It would therefore be proper to give here a full account of our relationship. Our first contact was in 1917. I have already described how during my college days I wrote an essay about Indian emigrants and how this came out in book form. I was encouraged to publish the book by T. K. Swaminathan who ran the journal, *Indian Colonist*. As C. P. was a relation and benefactor of Swaminathan, the book came out with a foreword by him. It is therefore not incorrect to say that C. P. sponsored my debut in the political arena.

C. P. could not have foreseen what sort of a man he had thus presented to the political world, nor could I have foreseen then what sort of a man wrote the foreword to my book. In 1917 C. P. was the general secretary of the Congress, while I was a mere college student. How could any one expect a lifelong antagonism to arise between us? How often and in how many ways did we not clash in the next ten years? These will emerge as the story unfolds.

After my return from England, I had occasion to meet Ramaswami Aiyar once or twice in Madras. Our first quarrel of sorts occurred while I was living there as editor of *Swarajya*. I published an article by C. V. Chandrasekharan in *Swarajya* attacking K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, a professor at Maharajah's College in Trivandrum. Aiyangar was an acknowledged scholar but his vanity and intolerance were also well-known. Although the article was written by Chandrasekharan it was unsigned and many in Madras including C. P. believed it to be my handiwork. I learned that C. P. made some reference to that article at the Cosmopolitan Club before a number of people holding out some implied threat to me. Soon afterwards, when C. P. became the Advocate-General and was decorated with the C.I.E., I wrote a facetious comment in *Swarajya* that this was the consummation of all opportunists. This was the prelude to our later enmity.

I left Madras in 1924 and my next contact with C. P. was in

1930 when I held the secretaryship of the Chamber of Princes. We acted together in certain matters, relating to the installation of the Travancore Maharajah on the *gaddi.* Although at that time we worked without any strained feelings, I learned not long after from some princes themselves that due to the intrigues of some people, Ramaswami Aiyar was working against me in the Chamber of Princes. I could not help retaliating. For the next three years we were not on speaking terms. As I knew that C. P. was responsible for many of my difficulties at the time, I in turn had no hesitation in exposing his mistakes and arming his opponents. Even while we were thus skirmishing, we had to serve together on several committees! Friends like Krishnamachari counselled that friction between us would only damage both, but such wise counsel could not prevail against our stubbornness. However, in December 1934, C. P. sent me a message through Mr K. G. Govindachari, inviting me to resolve our differences and to end our long quarrel. Accordingly, in December 1935 we met at Trivandrum. Most of our differences were ironed out, but it cannot be said that we parted friends, although we co-operated thereafter in political affairs.

When I began serving Bikaner, Maharajah Ganga Singh sent a letter to C. P. without my knowledge. C. P. and the Maharajah were old friends. The Maharajah asked C. P. not to let his differences with me affect their personal friendship and added that if possible he would like to see us reconciled. C. P.'s reply was curious. He stated definitely that there was no unfriendliness between the two of us and that the ill-will was between me and certain others. The implication was that it was the Maharani who was annoyed with me. It was C. P.'s habit thus to exculpate himself by throwing out innuendoes.

While our relationship was thus neutral, I felt that in the face of the critical war situation all of us had a duty to stand together. This was the reason for my audience with the Travancore Maharajah. I must state that the Maharajah received me cordially and kindly. C. P. and I held long discussions for two days on all matters affecting the Indian princes. That was a time when

C. P. tried to please the British government by working against Gandhiji. He could not refrain from reading out to me a letter he sent to Gandhiji totally denouncing his activities (with a copy to the Viceroy) expecting that I would be impressed. But my two-days conversation taught me one thing, that C.P. was an egoist who would barter anything, even the country and its freedom, to gratify a moment's vanity.

I did not return to Bikaner immediately after my visit to Trivandrum. I had an opportunity to realize a long-standing wish to tour north Malabar. During my *Hindustan Times* stint I had become friendly with a prominent north Malabar landowner by name Kootali Kunjikammaran Nambiar. Although we had been out of touch since then, it happened that Nambiar had written to me at Bikaner two months earlier, and this led to a renewal of our friendship. He extended a pressing invitation to me to visit north Malabar. But I did not go as a tourist. For a long time I had desired to write a novel about Pazhassi Kerala Varma. While reading the despatches of Lord Wellington for my examination at Oxford, I was intrigued by the exploits of the Paichi Raja mentioned in them. From my subsequent investigations into Kerala history I realized that this Paichi was none other than Pazhassi Kerala Varma. According to tradition, the same Kerala Varma wrote the Kottayam series of Kathakali plays and defied the soldier Wellesley[1] in the fight for Kerala's freedom. By this time my wish to write a novel about this personality had become an obsession. The only obstacle that remained was my ignorance of the north Malabar background, the places, the routes of communication and the geography. It was to repair this deficiency that I planned my trip.

My companion in this journey was Parayath Raman Menon. We went to Kootali together. It was a typical landowner's mansion of north Malabar, set in the middle of green fields and pastures. Apart from the traditional Malabar architecture of an enclosed house, a drilling ground and an armoury, its educated contemporary owner had built modern guest houses which made our stay quite comfortable. Kunjikam-

maran Nambiar was no frog in the pond farmer but a man of modern outlook with considerable interest in politics and literature. In his youth he had been a close friend of the poet K. C. Narayanan Nambiar and had built up a comprehensive collection of his works. Knowing the purpose of my visit, he had gathered in advance all material known to him about Kerala Varma and made the necessary arrangements to take me to the various places figuring in the story of the Pazhassi hero.

My first visit was to the site of the Pazhassi palace itself. Although the palace had been razed to the ground by the English invaders, later, on the recommendations of Logan[2] the Pazhassi royal family was restored and a new palace built near the ancient family site. The sole occupant of that palace at the time was a lady named Lakshmi Amma Raja. Nambiar had arranged for me to meet her and thus it chanced that I was entertained to tea at the Pazhassi palace itself.

This royal descendant, Srimati Lakshmi Amma Raja was a worthy scion of her illustrious race. Her worldly wisdom and conversational talent were surprising and reminded me of the princess Swati of whom Uddanda Sastri sang in his *Kokila Sandesam*[3] and also brought to my mind the ancient stanza[4] describing the lady of Purali.

When I went to Kytheri, the home of Pazhassi's lieutenant, the story was very different. Kytheri Ambu has gathered immortal renown as a freedom-fighter of Kerala, but his home lies today in ruins. The old structure and the family deity's shrine proclaimed its age, but the temple was in disrepair, the wells had not been cleaned, the main house itself was in bad shape. The present residents too have not fared well in the world and that ancient house seemed to me a sad picture of decay.

I subsequently visited other landowners like Kalyat and Chandroth, relations of Nambiar. One thing emerged from my rounds. The Nair chieftains of north Malabar were leaders not by virtue only of wealth or position but as the heirs of a proud tradition. They were not used to intermarriage with brahmins as in the south, especially in Cochin, and were conse-

quently free from the tyranny of priestcraft. In the south it was considered a sign of nobility to eschew meat and fish and to approximate to brahminism as far as possible. But in north Malabar this was not so and yet there are no Nairs as family-proud as those. They have managed to preserve their lineage and tradition undiluted.

Thus after traversing the length of Kerala from Trivandrum to Tellicherry I returned to Bikaner by the end of July.

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Mission in Kutch

Even when I left Patiala, it was apparent that the scheme of federation and the constitution based on it were still-born. After the death of Bhupendra Singh there was no one among the princes powerful enough to sponsor it. The Maharajah of Bikaner and the Jam Saheb were opposed to it. Although the Nizam had not openly proclaimed his demand for independence, he made no secret of his predilections. For that reason, Hydari too had to lean away from federalism. Sir Mirza Ismail, Krishnamachari and I were the three who had espoused federalism all along. If C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar would also join us, we felt we could still carry the day. But at the conference held in Bombay to discuss the subject, C. P. came forward as the advocate of the reactionaries. C. P.'s speech opposing an alliance with the Congress in order to achieve early independence was powerful enough to rally the princes. When the princes thus lined up behind Hydari and C. P., the three of us were totally disarmed.

I was sorely disappointed at the failure of ten years of work. Some princes like the Jam Saheb openly remarked on my discomfiture. While I knew it was a personal defeat, it was even more the folly of the princes, cutting their nose to spite their face, as it were, that made me despair. With the phenomenal growth of popular forces in British India, it was plain that monarchy in India was threatened and unless the princes had the intelligence and foresight to choose rightly, they themselves would be swept away. The only alternative was federation, and the princes themselves rejected it. Moreover, could any Indian resist the vision of a united, independent motherland? Yet the immediate way to this goal was blocked. All told, the political outlook seemed to me very depressing.

On 3 September 1939 Europe was at war. There is no need to recapitulate subsequent events in India. In seven provinces, popular government came to an end. The Congress went into the wilderness and its leaders into prison. While anyone with eyes could see the foundations of British power tottering, a few princes mistakenly thought that the temporary eclipse of the Congress would benefit them and competed with one another to serve the British power. The British sycophants among them donned military garb. They were under the delusion that this technique of toadying would induce the British to help perpetuate their autocratic rule. Nor were some Residents lacking in zeal to feed the delusion. Some of us tried to expose the delusion and argue that at the end of the war the British would quit, but our arguments fell on deaf years.

While the paramount power appeared to support the rule of the princes, events showed that it was in reality inclined to intervene unreservedly in the princely States in furtherance of the war effort. Indian ministers were removed and Britons substituted (as in Cochin and Kolhapur), the powers of princes were ended or curtailed (as in Cambay, Kotah, Alwar), princely expenditure was reduced, personal wealth assessed—in such ways the paramount power interfered at will in the affairs of the States.

I was at the time in a mood of dejection following the collapse of the federation proposals. I withdrew from the Committee of Ministers, convinced that the power of the princes was fast ending and what was left was only its fading glow. I did not attend their discussions and conferences, nor did I feel any interest in them. I paid no attention to anything except improving the administration of the departments entrusted to me in Bikaner.

Apart from foreign relations, my main duties in Bikaner concerned the departments of education, legislature, public health and municipal self-government. I was specially concerned with educational progress. Introduction of science classes in the college, opening of M.A. classes, increasing the number

of girls' schools, expanding grants-in-aid to private schools, opening more libraries around the State, were some steps in my programme of educational improvement. Although Maharajah Ganga Singh was not enamoured of the spread of popular education, I must admit that he did not oppose any of these measures.

I was able to introduce reforms in local government also. Here too the Maharajah was not enthusiastic. But it was only with his support that I could reconstitute the legislature. I increased the number of non-officials and gave them a majority. The Maharajah also accepted my recommendations to increase the powers of the legislative assembly and to bring its practices into line with those in States like Mysore and Travancore. I do not claim any special credit for these achievements. As I have myself described in my play *Dhruva Swamini*,[1] my achievements were due to the Maharajah's sense of duty and his devotion to the public good. At any rate, my work commended itself to the Maharajah and the public alike. As a result, after two years, my appointment was indefinitely extended and the designation, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers was accorded to me.

By virtue of seniority, authority and influence Maharajah Ganga Singh was the doyen among Indian princes. Most of the princes, from the Nizam downwards, sought his advice and assistance from time to time in various matters. As time went on, the Maharajah came to delegate these jobs more and more to me. I was thus pitchforked into certain princely problems every now and again. I will now dilate on one such.

It was in July 1941 that the government of India decided to depose the Maharajah of Kutch. Maharajadhiraj Mirza Maharao Khemgarji was at the time seventy-five-years old but his physical and mental powers were unimpaired. For sixty years he had ruled Kutch and in all this long period, the government of India gave him due respect and in fact deputed him to represent India at one Imperial Conference and another International Conference. I myself knew that he was twice elected Vice-Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes and carried out his duties competently. All the Indian princes revered him as an elder and a guru.

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Kutch is an ancient State. Its rulers claim that theirs is the senior branch of the dynasty set up by Sri Krishna himself. They boast that no one has conquered this island which is only slightly bigger than Travancore. Historians testify that at one time Kutch had a strong navy and its rulers entered into treaties as equals with the rulers of Egypt and Abyssinia. Maharao Khemgarji was a worthy member of his line and a sturdy independent.

The British government's charge against Khemgarji was that his administration was not progressive enough to suit the conditions of the day. The Resident, Gibson, served an ultimatum to the Maharajah on 22 July that he should appoint a Dewan chosen by the central government and concede him full authority to administer the State as he deemed fit, setting a time limit of one week for acceptance of this arrangement. The fifty-seven-year old *Yuvaraja* (heir apparent) was obviously in a hurry to ascend the *gaddi*. Not only were the *Yuvaraja* and Resident friends, but many neighbouring princes were also inclined to favour the *Yuvaraja*. Everyone knew that the Viceroy's advice, couched in the form of an ultimatum, could be defied only on pain of deposition and Gibson did not imagine that Khemgarji would dare to defy it. The Viceroy had agreed to lend his own Secretary to serve as Dewan.

Khemgarji though aged was a man of spirit and would not be browbeaten by the Resident. He sent a chartered plane to Bikaner and asked the Maharajah to send me back the same day for consultation. Accordingly, at the orders of Maharajah Ganga Singh, I came to Bombay. Khemgarji was staying at the Taj Mahal Hotel, quite unperturbed. Even before my arrival, he had replied to the Viceroy to the effect that it was not possible for him to send a reply in a week's time, and as the matters raised were of grave moment, he needed time till the middle of August to send a considered reply. Following our consultations, he accepted my advice and wrote to Bikaner seeking permission for me to stay on in Bombay until the affair was resolved. He then sent a bold letter to the Viceroy in which he said that he was ready to introduce all necessary adminis-

trative reforms and would appoint a suitable Dewan himself, but that he was not willing to appoint the Viceroy's nominee. Although he pressed me more than once to serve as Dewan, on any salary I wanted, I could not accept the offer.

15 August was the deadline set for the reply. It was only on the 14th evening that the Maharajah approved the final draft of the reply. It was immediately sent for typing. When the typing was half way through, it was discovered that the Maharajah's official notepaper was exhausted. Since it would be unthinkable to send a reply on ordinary notepaper, the typing was stopped. That same night a search was made and eventually some official notepaper was unearthed from the house of a Kutch official. The letter was completed and signed, but the time was past midnight, and the letter could not be posted that day.

Gibson was already out for blood and this excuse would have sufficed for him to impale the Maharajah. Accordingly, I sent a telegram to Gibson testifying that the letter was posted that same night. The next morning, on 15 August, I called on the Private Secretary to the Viceroy, Sir Gilbert Laithwaite, whom I had known for a long time and explained matters to him. Laithwaite had accompanied the Viceroy to Bombay only two days earlier.

Khemgarji heard from the Viceroy some days after I had returned to Bikaner. The Viceroy's response was mostly favourable. It agreed to the appointment of a Dewan acceptable to the Maharajah and disclaimed any intention of abrogating the Maharajah's authority or title in any way. Immediately this response was to hand, he telegraphed to Maharajah Ganga Singh requesting my presence. We discussed the whole matter at length and outlined the most immediate administrative reforms. When I set out on my return journey, the Maharajah pressed a reward of Rs. 25,000 on me for the assistance I had given him. I had no hesitation in declining it. I told him that it was not proper for me to accept from the Maharajah of Kutch a reward for services I had rendered to him as the Minister of the Maharajah of Bikaner.

14

Literary Interests Again

During these two years of withdrawal from national politics, I was able to turn out a certain amount of literary work. Although I have been interested in Sanskrit literature from my boyhood, I never had the time or opportunity to cultivate the interest or to enlarge my direct knowledge of that literature. I did not want to achieve syntactic skill or elaborate scholarship in the language, yet I wanted to read and follow Sanskrit poetry and drama without difficulty. It seemed that the occasion was now at hand. I began with *Raghuvamsa* with Mallinatha's commentary. Subsequently, I had no great difficulty in reading and understanding *Kumarasambhava*, *Meghaduta*, *Sakuntalam* and other works of Kalidasa.

When I reached the stage of reading simple and uncomplicated Sanskrit easily, my interest shifted to the literature of the Jains. The language of the Jains is admittedly ungrammatical and their writings distorted by interpolations. My attention was drawn first to the voluminous treatise *Trisalaka Shashti Purusha Charita* by Hema Chandra Suri,[1] celebrated as a latter-day Vyasa. This chronicle is full of Hindu *puranic* lore adapted and extended to fit Jain doctrines. My endeavour was to locate and study these interpolations and departures for their historical interest. I went on to study the work of other Jain poets of Suri's school, among which *Nara Narayaneeya*,[2] *Vasanta Vilasa*[3] and *Nalodaya*[4] are worthy of mention. The Sanskrit of the Buddhists also attracted me at this time. Prominent among this school of writing are the *Buddha Charita* and *Sundara Nanda* of Aswaghosha.[5] I read *Sundara Nanda* on the advice of poet Vallathol.

In the Hindu school of Sanskrit writing, my daily reading was Somadeva's *Kathasaritsagara*.[6] The British scholar

Tawney has rendered this work into English in ten volumes under the title, *Ocean of Stories*. By all counts, among the world's treasuries of stories, primacy would go to this work. Among Western scholars it enjoys a reputation almost equal to the *Mahabharata*. It occurred to me when I read the English version that it formed a useful commentary to several episodes in Indian history. The benefit accruing from a daily reading of *Kathasaritsagara* for twelve months came home to me four years later when I wrote *A Survey of Indian History*.[7]

There is an old and distinguished Sanskrit library in Bikaner. Its contents were lying neglected in a building at the mercy of termites and other pests. I had about that time invited Dr Kunjan Raja to Bikaner to examine the library and to renovate it on modern lines so that it could be of use to scholars. He had agreed to spend three months every year in Bikaner examining the books and manuscripts and help to classify and arrange them. I need hardly say that my association with this eminent scholar stimulated my interest in Sanskrit literature.

I was also able in those two years to devote myself to Malayalam writing. The plays, *Mandodari*[8] and *Dhruva Swamini*, the novel *Kerala Simham*,[9] the poems *Chatookti Muktavali*,[10] *Sandhya Ragam*[11] were all written during this period. *Mandodari* and *Chatookti Muktavali* were in fact written simultaneously. I used to write the former regularly and the latter intermittently. I recollect that the publication of *Mandodari* created a flutter in literary circles because of its introductory essay in which I reviewed the theory of dramatic form. Certain young poets with a superficial knowledge of European literature were laying down the law at the time—drama should not be couched in verse, naturalism demanded prose, heightened emotion was the *sine qua non* of drama, a play was not a play if it did not observe the three unities, and so forth. Partial to Sanskrit drama myself, I could not agree with these views. In addition, a study of European dramatic literature convinced me that these views had no support in their practice either. When some reviewers criticised my play *Bhishma*[12] along these lines, it seemed to me that I should review the theory of

dramatic form in the light of European examples. The introduction to *Mandodari* followed.

My thesis was that irrespective of the appropriateness of verse in stage plays, drama as a branch of literature certainly rested on a poetic base and all the world's great dramatists, from the Greeks down to the moderns, exemplified this thesis. Although a few leading playwrights like Ibsen, Chekhov and Shaw had in recent times produced works of importance in prose dealing with social problems specifically composed for the stage, this had in no way reduced the primacy of poetic drama in the world of literature in English, French, German or other languages. I cited moderns like Hardy, Eliot and others for their verse plays in English.

I was able to ascertain very soon that this introduction more than served my purpose. It is worth mentioning that several prose playwrights in Malayalam wrote to me endorsing my views. All literatures accept the Sanskritist theory that the ultimate achievement of poetry is drama. This can be inferred from the primacy accorded in English to Shakespeare, in France to Corneille and Racine and in Germany to Goethe. This has resulted certainly from the combination of poetry and drama in their work.

Chatookti Muktavali was also composed with a purpose. At present the poetry of emotion holds the field in our language. I was also one of those who helped to swell the tide of this type of writing as my collection of poems in *Prema Geeti*[13] will show. But it seemed to me that obsession with lyrical poetry did not bode any good. It has been my understanding that the single-stanza poetic epigram occupies an honoured place in the Malayalam tradition. I doubt if such a rich harvest of poetic epigrams exists in any Indian language except Sanskrit and it was my reaction against the latter-day neglect of this tradition that prompted the writing of this work. I had for my models Vallathol's *Vilasa Latika*[14] in Malayalam and the *Amarusataka*[15] in Sanskrit. I was gratified by the encouraging reception the book received. Vallathol wrote a four-line stanza in appreciation.

I must refer also to the poem *Hyder Naik*[16] here. I had published a poem of this name in the magazine *Kavana Kaumudi* in my younger days, but never contemplated its issue in book form. One day my friend Parayath Raman Menon showed a manuscript copy of the poem to the publishers, B. V. Book Depot who wrote to me seeking permission to publish it. When I looked up the original at their instance and found that its style no longer appealed to me. I therefore decided to entirely re-write the poem. It is this rewritten work that came out as *Hyder Naik*. The play *Dhruva Swamini* was based on an incident merely cited in passing in this poem.

I mentioned *Kerala Simham* in an earlier chapter. The background to this work is my desire to end the insularity that has been compartmentalizing Kerala history between Travancore, Cochin and Malabar. People in the north knew little or nothing of Veluthambi Dalava and those in Travancore were equally ignorant about the heroes of Malabar, like Kytheri Ambu. In English schools Malayalis read of Rana Pratap Singh and Krishna Kumari but hardly anything about Pazhassi Kerala Varma Raja or Makku. It is true that late in the day, the so-called *vadakkan pattu*[17] came into vogue and gained recognition in the south, but a corresponding recognition of the story of Eravikutti Pillai or Vaikom Padmanabha Pillai in the north was yet to come. The movement for a united Kerala was gaining ground, but this was hampered by the fragmentation of Kerala history. My books, *Malabar and the Portuguese*[18] and *Malabar and the Dutch*[19] were intended to counter this trend and to see Kerala as a whole. My novel *Parangi Padayali*[20] was set in the history of Cochin and gave a picture of the Mamangam festival conducted by the Zamorin at Tirunavaya. I wished to write a similar novel based on north Malabar and because the inspiring life of Kerala Varma had long fascinated me, *Kerala Simham* came to be written.

Desamangalam Vasudevan Nambudiripad who took up the management of the Mangalodayam Publishing Company had sought a book from me. Thus as soon as I had completed my

first-hand survey of the background, I sat down to write *Kerala Simham*. The book was popular and to the author the comments of northern critics were especially pleasing. The fact that it was reprinted very early is another indication of its immediate success.

My play, *Dhruva Swamini*, was also published around this time. Its predecessors, *Bhishma* and *Mandodari*, were based on the *Puranas* and a friend complained that the stories were hackneyed. Hence I chose this historic but little known story for my new play. About this time too, several correspondents were complaining that I had slipped into literary orthodoxy. My younger friends protested that I should not entirely abandon modern form of writing. They reminded me that I had championed the introduction of Western ideas and poetic methods into Malayalam in my youth. But I had not gone back on my views. With increased experience, my liking for European literature merely increased, but simultaneously my respect for Indian literature also grew. It was my increased appreciation of Indian literature that induced me to adopt the Sanskrit models in my recent works, but this did not mean that I had turned away from Western literature. Anyway I decided to heed my young friends and attempt a kind of sonnet sequence in Malayalam, which led to the poems in *Sandhya Rangam*.[21]

My *Rasika Rasayanam*[22] was written two years later, but a word about it may be appropriate here. The late Rama Varma Thampan asked me long ago, perhaps as far back as 1920, to render the *Rubaiyat* into Malayalam. I turned down the idea disclaiming the requisite experience or scholarship. In 1941 my son-in-law's brother, A. K. Gopala Pillai, reminded me of Thampan's suggestion and insisted that I should try, at least in memory of my departed friend. I agreed, but the difficulty of the task continued to put me off. Meantime, having read Sankara Kurup's version in *Vilasa Lahari*[23] I doubted if there was any need for yet another translation. However, two years later, on a journey to Delhi, I took a copy of the *Rubaiyat* for

reading. Casually, during that trip, I essayed the Malayalam rendering of a single verse. While Kurup's translation was beautiful, it was metrically variant. It seemed to me that the use of a four-line stanza similar to that of Omar would give my attempt a 'new look'. That was how *Rasika Rasayanam* was born.

15

A Review

By February 1942 I learned that Maharajah Ganga Singh had cancer and would not live more than a few months. For a long time the news had been kept secret. People in high life who fall ill are plagued as much by the multiplicity of advice open to them. It was thus with the Maharajah. The top physician at Bikaner was the German, Dr Weingarten, who had an international reputation. Although the Maharajah consulted him, he did not always follow his advice. One reason was the Maharajah's friendship for the able and attractive Dr Sivakamu. This lady, hailing from Madras, was as skilled in surgery as she was in the even more intricate art of serving a king. She and Wiengarten were thus rivals and usually disagreed about the line of treatment. Caught in the medical crossfire, it was hardly surprising that the Maharajah's treatment often included sorcery, *ayurvedic* and allopathic medicine and priestly incantations.

The Maharajah underwent surgery in Bombay and then some further treatment in Madras before returning to Bikaner. At this juncture I received an invitation to visit America for a conference of the Pacific Institute. The Maharajah heard of this with pleasure. Towards the end of November I set out on that eventful trip, but since I have written a book about it, I propose to skip the details here.

It was on my arrival in London on the return journey that I heard the sad news of the death of Maharajah Ganga Singh. I had little personal contact with his successor, Sardul Singh and had no idea what shape events would take. When I returned to Bikaner at the end of March, therefore, I was waiting upon events to decide about the future.

The new Maharajah received me pleasantly and with great

consideration. I was not without the suspicion that he needed my services temporarily to dislodge the old ministers, most of whom he disliked and to instal in their place his own favourites. Sardul Singh insisted that I should continue to serve him as I had served his father and that I should not leave him especially during the early phase of his reign. I agreed. This was how I came to work as Dewan in Bikaner during a critical and historic period in Indian history.

It has to be admitted that in comparison with his eminent father, Sardul Singh was deficient in princely qualities. Although Ganga Singh had some of the defects arising from vanity and excess of power, he had initiative, ability, tact, a constant regard for the public good and the ability to win over men of superior ability, with the result that he achieved fame as a powerful and public-spirited Maharajah. He did not encourage courtiers. But Sardul Singh was his opposite. Avarice, distrust of his officials, delight in flattery, an overweening vanity and a thirst for fame, dependence on favourities, all these princely defects were combined in him. It is no exaggeration to say that he was a puppet in the hands of a favourite, Pratap Singh, a man who was corrupt, evil and practically illiterate. It may be wondered how I managed to survive as Dewan for five years under such a prince.

In the first two weeks I sized up the situation and sought certain assurances from the Maharajah. The first was that he agreed to follow my advice in all constitutional matters and in administrative policy. I also made it clear that I did not wish to interfere in matters relating to the palace or in the award of honours and titles. His preocupation was with self-advertisement, with the distribution of honours and titles for monetary consideration and with the beautification of the capital. His followers were concerned with making money from rationed and controlled commodities. I clashed with them repeatedly on this subject. Although these particular departments had to be ceded to Pratap Singh, he too was afraid of public outcry and did not venture to violate the general policy prescribed by me.

In the beginning, the Maharajah and Pratap Singh wanted to influence the police and judiciary. Since the High Court was directly under the Dewan, they could not touch it. But the Maharajah tried to intimidate District Judges and *Munsifs* into carrying out his behests and I had to threaten resignation before this was stopped. Because I was a brake on his autocratic proclivities, the Maharajah and I were never very friendly. Not that he did not trust me. But because I did not hesitate to oppose his views and to check his vagaries, he did feel irritated and annoyed.

Sardul Singh's principal ambition was to surpass the reputation of his illustrious father. In fact, he could not even tolerate hearing his father's name. As his father was an acknowledged leader in Indian public life, the son was prepared to go to any length to achieve a similar status. He knew that Indian politics were in the melting pot and that British rule was ending. In this situation, he no doubt felt that a suitable adviser was indispensable to help him attain a position of importance in the new set-up. This explains his insistence on my continued service.

Although my tenure in Bikaner had its drawbacks, it was not without some attractions. In the first place, it was an admirable vantage point from which to watch and understand the changes sweeping India. Delhi was near and participation in Delhi's activities easy. Unlike civil servants, the Dewans of Indian States were not precluded from political activity. My stay in Bikaner thus helped me to keep in touch with Congress leaders on constitutional questions. It also happened that at this critical period, the Dewans of all the major Rajput States were South Indians and we were thus able to work as a powerful group in the political scene.

Although Rajasthan consisted of eighteen States, the principal States were four, namely Udaipur, Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bikaner, with a combined area of 90,000 square miles. They were administered respectively by Sir T. Vijayaraghavachari, Sir V. T. Krishnamachari, C. S. Venkatachar and myself. Because the four of us were good friends and enjoyed each other's trust and worked in close harmony, these four States were able to exert a combined

influence in Indian politics. Because of his advanced age and delicate health, Vijayaraghavachari did not take an active part in these. Venkatachar was an I.C.S. official entering State service for the first time. However, Krishnamachari and I were different. We had entered State service more or less simultaneously in 1927. From the first Round Table Conference in London in 1930 we worked in close co-operation. Even in those days he was of great support to me. But our collaboration really began after he became Dewan of the neighbouring State of Jaipur.

Tamil Nadu has produced four outstanding men in recent times who stand in the forefront of Indian public life by virtue of intelligence and industry. C.Rajagopalachari, the first Governor-General of free India, N. Gopalaswami Iyengar who was Prime Minister of Kashmir and later a minister of the union government, V. T. Krishnamachari and C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar. Of these, Rajaji's qualities need no encomium from me. Gopalaswami Iyengar made his name as an able official, but because of his family ties he was always close to the Congress. He was a nephew of the famous editor, Kasturiranga Iyengar, whose *Hindu* was once a mouthpiece of the Congress and the brother of A. Rangaswami Iyengar who was the chief lieutenant of Motilal Nehru, leader of the Swarajya Party. It is hardly surprising that on his retirement Goplaswami Iyengar was invited to join the Congress, which was his natural home. Gopalaswami shone by his learning, his industry, his penetrating intelligence, his impartiality and his integrity. In intelligence and dynamism, C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar was the equal of both of them, but because of certain flaws in his character, he crossed to the other side of the barricades at a moment of peril for the motherland.

It can be asserted without hesitation that Krishnamachari was their equal in intelligence and perhaps their superior in sheer practical competence. Administration was his forte. His mind did not stray into Upanishadic philosophy like Rajagopalachari's, into political theory like Gopalaswami's or into aesthetic appreciation like C.P.'s. But in the steadfastness so

vital to good administrators, in the grasp of economics and in unflappability in crises, he was certainly ahead of them. I often thought of Krishnamachari's even course in the storms of politics as the progress of a majestic battleship defying the turbulent sea.

Krishnamachari's presence as Dewan of Jaipur was a source of great strength to me. His influence among the Indian princes was matchless. In their councils he was treated as a veritable Bhishma. It also turned out to be a blessing to me that the Chancellor of the Princes' Chamber, the Nawab of Bhopal, was equally allergic to both of us! How our alliance served to bring the princes into the federal union will be evident from the unfolding story.

It would be legitimate to ask how the people of Bikaner benefited from my five years as Dewan. However, it would be improper for me to pass judgment on my own work. That is a task for others. I will merely say that it was my desire to serve the public good and I think I was able to achieve something.

I do not want to write about the administrative reforms I was responsible for bringing about in Bikaner. But it would perhaps be interesting to narrate one or two incidents revealing the state of things in Bikaner. Three-fourths of Bikaner was held by Rajput chieftains known as Thakurs. Because the writ of the Maharajah did not run within their principalities, it is difficult to exaggerate the oppressions practised by the Thakurs. The tenants had practically no rights over the land they tilled. A tax on houses, a tax on marriages, a tax on cattle, a tax on births, a tax on deaths—this was the way the Thakurs went about raising money. Since there were no police or revenue officials within these enclaves, we in the capital rarely heard of these outrages. I used to counsel Maharajah Ganga Singh as the Vice-Chairman of the Council that this set-up had to change for the State's own good, but as a Rajput partisan he kept on postponing any action.

One of the first matters to engage me after I became Dewan was the atrocities of a chieftain named General Raja Jivaraja Singh, a curious individual indeed. He was a General in the army, the

Raja of Sandur State, a leader of the Thakurs, a close friend of Ganga Singh and a member of his Cabinet till his death. The charge against him was that he blinded a servant of his and later tried to poison him. His eldest son was also a fellow accused. Since Jivaraja Singh was an old friend of his father, the new Maharajah was inclined to dislike him. I insisted on his being promptly tried. Even to prosecute a Thakur we needed the Maharajah's consent and a royal warrant. The Maharajah apprehended that a public trial and conviction of such a prominent chieftain would outrage Rajput pride. After much debate, the Maharajah agreed to use his supreme authority to depose the man and to place him in court custody. Although I had to be content with this compromise, I must admit that this punishment proved more effective than I thought.

The Thakurs were in a panic. If the most powerful of them could be hauled up like this what was their own future to be. I seized this opportunity to establish tenancy rights in their principalities, to prohibit levy of personal taxes and to institute the regular *jamabandi*[1] system of revenue collection. I consider this enactment a substantive measure of progress.

I also felt it would be an achievement to spread education among women in a State where *purdah* still prevailed. Since education was in my charge from the time I joined Bikaner service, it was possible for me to achieve this object. When I joined in 1939, there were only two middle schools for girls in the whole State, one in the capital and the other in Ganganagar! The State boasted of only six high schools and a single college teaching degree students. In 1947, the State had altogether twenty high schools and five intermediate colleges, while the college in Bikaner was upgraded to teach science to postgraduates. The college in Churu provided commerce classes also.

In addition, I believe it a matter for satisfaction that we were able to organize a common university for Rajputana. When the reputed statesman, Sir Mirza Ismail, was Dewan of Jaipur, he wished to set up a university there. I was able to persuade him that there was no need for a university for Jaipur by itself and it was preferable to have a common university for

Rajasthan. By that time Sir Mirza left Jaipur for Hyderabad. Since his successor in Jaipur was Krishnamachari, there was no obstruction to the Rajasthan University project thereafter. But when the proposals took definite shape, another difficulty arose. Although the Dewan of Udaipur was the veteran administrator T. Vijayaraghavachari, the Maharana did not readily accept his advice. The Maharana preferred to be guided by the Bombay lawyer and Congress leader K. M. Munshi. Munshi's plan was to set up a new university in the historic city of Chittor named after the illustrious Maharana Pratap Singh. Since Chittor lacked the facilities and Udaipur State the finance for this grand scheme, Krishnamachari and I had to oppose this project. Ultimately we were able to establish the University of Rajasthan in Jaipur.

Another point gained by me during my Bikaner term as Dewan may be mentioned. The Bikaner royal family boasted of two famous scholars in Karna Singh and Anup Singh who served the Mugals as Viceroys in many places and who built up a great library of manuscripts. This collection of over twelve thousand valuable Sanskrit works was neglected and did not even have an accurate catalogue. At the jubilee of Maharajah Ganga Singh, I persuaded him to release this library from palace ownership and convert it into a public institution. After a year, when I was appointed minister, the Maharajah entrusted the care of the Anup Sanskrit Library, as it was called, to me. Until the time I left Bikaner, I continued to watch over this institution.

My first step in regard to the Anup Library was to invite a competant scholar to inspect the Library and to survey its rare manuscripts. The scholar invited was Dr C. Kunjan Raja. As long as I was in Bikaner, he was my adviser in this matter. I have no doubt that he was one of the most eminent Indian scholars having regard to his erudition, his devotion to Sanskirt and Indian culture, his experience with ancient books and manuscripts and his unremitting industry. His memory frequently astonished me. The works published by him relate to grammar, philosophy, music, poetry and the Vedas which goes to indicate the range of his scholarship.

At his advice and under his supervision, a comprehensive list of books in the library was issued. We followed up with a series of publications under the name Ganga Singh Series which included the *Samgitaraja* of Maharana Kumbhakarna,[2] the *Todaranandam* of Todar Mall,[3] *Jagad Vijay Chandas* of Kavindracharya.[4] The magnitude of the contribution of the series to Sanskrit studies can thus be estimated.

A major help to my work in Bikaner was the private secretary to the Maharajah, M. Unnikrishna Menon. Maharajah Ganga Singh used to employ Malayali stenographers in his own office. It was in this capacity that Unnikrishna Menon arrived in Bikaner. When I joined the Bikaner service, Menon was principal stenographer. Soon after the Maharajah promoted him as asstistant private secretary. By his tact, loyalty, ability and modesty he won approval and I recommended his appointment as private secretary. When Maharajah Sardul Singh ascended the *gaddi,* he appointed Menon his permanent private secretary.

Unnikrishna Menon showed great devotion in persuading the Maharajah to adopt progressive measures and in carrying out the Maharajah's orders with the minimum friction. One of his chief duties was to mediate in the constant differences between the Maharajah and myself. How successfully he discharged this duty is evidenced by my surviving five years service under Sardul Singh.

16

The Commonwealth Conference

After the death of Maharajah Ganga Singh my estrangement from the Chamber of Princes increased. The cause was the realization among many princes that I was a nationalist and opponent of princely autocracy. My views and activities in respect of federation were disapproved by most princes. I did not conceal my views and in fact strove to propagate them. No wonder I was anathema to many.

In 1943 the Nawab of Bhopal was elected Chancellor of the Chamber. Even in 1931-2, when he first became Chancellor and I was secretary, there was some friction between us. Ten years contact merely served to convert the first antipathy into mutual dislike. One year's stay in Bhopal had taught me that Hamidullah was a Muslim partisan and enemy of the Hindus. I was certain that he manoeuvred to gain the Chancellorship at this time to strengthen the voice of the Muslims and to weaken the Hindu claims with the instrumentality of the Hindu princes. However, the princes did not share this view. Hamidullah ingratiated himself with fellow princes with brotherly or nepotic deference. After the death of Ganga Singh there were few princes in India who could match him in shrewdness and diplomacy.

His very first act was to pack the Chamber secretariat with Muslims. His plan was to bring the Ministers Committee, effective organ of the Chamber, under his thumb. It was at this time that V. T. Krishnamachari resigned as Dewan of Baroda. Since he was the Vice-Chairman of the Ministers Committee, a successor had to be elected. Hamidullah backed the Nawab of Chattari, the Nizam's Prime Minister. Many members of the Committee felt this an unsuitable choice. Hydari had already functioned as Chairman of the Committee for four years and to

instal a Hyderabad representative again did not seem proper. Several people also suspected this as an attempt to swing the Committee to the Muslim camp. We therefore decided to fight this proposal. Some proposed my name instead.

The Nawab of Bhopal was thoroughly annoyed. He never thought that his nominee and the Prime Minister of Hyderabad at that, would ever be opposed. My nomination was made without consulting the Maharajah of Bikaner. When his attempt to use this excuse failed, he sent Sir Manubhai Mehta and Liaquat Hayat Khan to me. They queried the propriety of my opposing a candidate sponsored by the Chancellor. I countered with the charge that the Ministers Committee was to function independently and my candidature was intended to show the impropriety of the Chancellor's intervention. There was no desire to defeat the Prime Minister of Hyderabad. Anyway when I refused to withdraw, the Nawab was very angry. The matter went to a poll. The Hyderabad camp considered even this an affront. According to them, the Nizam's minister was honouring the Committee by attending it. In the poll, eight voted for Chattari and six for me, thus giving the victory to the Chancellor, who nevertheless took the incident as a direct insult.

Hamidullah was a close friend of Sardul Singh before the latter assumed the *gaddi*. Even thereafter they continued to be friends. While my candidature in opposition to Bhopal was unpalatable to the Maharajah, when the latter came to realize the significance of Bhopal's manoeuvres, he was quick to dissociate himself. The Chancellor attributed this cooling off to my influence and it merely deepened his enmity.

Our mutual hostility came to a head at the time of the celebrated incident of the 'Princes' Resignation'. The resignation was touched off by a letter sent on 2 December 1944 by the political secretary to the Viceroy. The letter came to the Chancellor at about 9 p.m. on the night of 2 December. The Nawab immediately invited the Maharajahh of Bikaner, the Jam Saheb, the Maharaja of Patiala and one or two ministers to his residence for consultations. I was not invited. When the Jam Saheb queried this, Bhopal (as I learned later) prevaricated with

an open mis-statement that he could not locate me. This secret conclave decided that the Committee of the Chamber should resign *en masse*. The next morning the Maharajah of Bikaner sent for me to seek my advice. Before I had reached the palace and read the political secretary's letter, a message from the Jam Saheb urgently summoned me to his hotel. The reason was obscure. When I reached the hotel, it was not yet 9 a.m. but he detained me there till 11. Thereafter we went to the Chamber meeting together but found the members already in conference. The other members of the Chamber had approved the decision taken the previous night.

It was the Jam Saheb himself who let me into the secret afterwards. The Nawab could guess that I would not support the proposal that the Chamber working committee should resign and if I argued against it, he expected not only the Maharajah of Bikaner but several other princes to accept my arguments. He therefore thought of a ruse to prevent the Maharajah from consulting me and of keeping me out of the conference when this issue was debated. Hamidullah knew that the Jam Saheb and I were good friends and prevailed upon the former to keep me out of the discussions by any means. The Jam Saheb agreed to do this and this was how I was practically 'shanghaied' for a period of four hours.

I later asked the Jam Saheb why he joined in this plot. He replied laughingly: 'If Hamidullah chooses to make a fool of himself, it is not my business to stop him ; nor, for that matter, is it yours.' While I was aware of the capacity of the princes for folly and betraying their own real interests, I never imagined that the Jam Saheb would subordidnate the common interest to the pleasure of discrediting Hamidullah.

I was only relieved that this decision to resign was taken without my knowledge. I could therefore openly condemn it. I declared publicly that this was a childish stratagem and such a resignation would not only leave the government of India unmoved but would actually harm the princes who depended on the government's protection and authority. Hamidullah's bombshell thus turned out to be a very damp squib. Neither

the Viceroy nor the politicians nor even the press took any notice. When he found that his stratagem had misfired, Hamidullah tried to saddle the blame for its failure upon me.

On 9 February 1945 I set out as a delegate to the Commonwealth Conference in London. The princes had been sitting in conclave in Bombay from 1 to 6 February to review events following their resignation. I did not want to join these discussions, but I received confidential advice that I was accused of working to defeat Hamidullah and of going to England to pursue this objective. The princes were being canvassed to stop my journey. I therefore accompanied the Maharajah to Bombay. Bhopal did not expect this. While it did not deter him from trying to put the blame for his failure on me, his attacks petered out in my presence. Nor could he stop my journey. Perhaps he feared that I might expose the Chancellor's machinations while in England. I never had any such intention. When it was clear that I was going, he insisted on sending a second delegate as the Chancellor's personal representative to which the princes assented.

Although I spent only four weeks in London in this connection, I was able to use this time to good purpose. While the discussions in the Conference were *in camera*, they had considerable significance in the light of India's impending freedom. The Indian representatives led by Sir Mohamed Zafrullah numbered six including Raja Maharaj Singh, Sir Bhuta Singh and myself. All of us spoke with one voice in demanding full independence for India. While I joined in these discussions, I concentrated on certain other vital objectives. I had drawn up a scheme for the projection of Hindu culture in England and sent it in advance to Amery,[1] Lionel Curtis[2] and the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University. I was also promoting the scheme through various friends. Some other objects of my trip were to interest people on the need to publish authoritative English translations of books from Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindi, Malayalam and other languages, to plan a cultural exhibition in England which would help Europeans to form a proper appreciation of Indian culture, and to initiate an authentic

history of India. I was able to interest Oxford University in the first and the university authorities assured me that increasing attention would be given to Indian studies. The exhibition project also secured immediate support. Amery told me that once the war was over an Exhibition on Indian Culture would be organized in London. This was how the 1948 Exhibition came to be launched.

I tried to forward another literary project while in England. Many *litteratteur* friends were anxious to hold an all-India literary congress and Sir Mirza Ismail had agreed to host it in Jaipur. If such a congress were to be held, I wished to invite prominent British, French and other writers to represent their respective literatures. The president elect, Sarojini Naidu, also shared this wish. In pursuance of her authority therefore I was able to invite E. M. Forster, the secretary of the P.E.N. movement, Herman Ould and others for the Congress to be held in November 1945 in India.

One thing was clear to me during this London visit. The World War was drawing to a close. It was beyond question that immediately it ended, the British would withdraw from India. Whatever then happened, whether Pakistan came about or not and whether India remained in the British empire or left it, it was certain that the Indian princes would not count for much in an independent India. Their political standing was deteriorating almost day by day. While this was plain to everyone else, the princes themselves continued in the main to remain ignorant. Their preoccupation was with petty personal ambitions like the size of their salutes, their titles and honours, their personal powers and so on. It is hardly surprising that, living a dream life in ivory palaces, isolated from their subjects and in ignorance of world conditions, they knew little of the growing might of the popular will. On the contrary, they deluded themselves that the British after waging an all-out struggle for victory in the World War would never quit India but would stay on to teach a lesson to the Congressmen who had so long thwarted the princes and themselves.

On my return, I gave the Maharajah a confidential report

analyzing the situation. After reading it, the Maharajah asked the Nawab of Bhopal to call an immediate meeting of the Chamber to consider the problems. What the Maharajah, acting on my advice, wrote to Hamidullah was that once the war ended the independence of India would not be long delayed, and hence it was imperative that that Chamber set up a committee forthwith to negotiate with Indian leaders and the British government to settle their consititutional future and that such a Committee should in addition to princes include also the more prominent ministers.

The consequent meeting that Bhopal convened on 1 May 1945 at Bombay is a landmark in recent Indian history. I went to Bombay on 26 April for preparatory work and to join in the work of the ministerial committee preceding it. It was a useful opportunity for consulting other ministers, to place my own views before them and to understand the Nawab's motives and tactics.

At the meeting on 1 May, the Princes' Chamber was represented by Nawab Hamidullah of Bhopal, Maharajah Yadavendra Singh of Patiala, Maharaja Sardul Sing of Bikaner and Jam Saheb Digvijay Singh, while the ministers attending were the Nawab of Chattari (Hyderabad), Pulla Reddi (Mysore,) Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar (Travancore), Raja Gyan Nath (Indore), Sir T. Vijayaraghavachari (Udaipur), Sir Liaquat Hayat Khan (Bhopal), Harbhit Singh Mallick (Patiala) and myself. That the meeting was fully representative cannot be doubted. Of the State ministers actively concerned with constitutional affairs, only two were absent. Of these, Krishnamachari was then in America representing the States in a Conference while Sir Mirza Ismail, though he could not come because of other work, had sent letters to Bhopal and myself setting out his views.

When the meeting opened, Hamidullah asked me to give a brief review of the situation as observed by me during my visit to England. I stressed the gravity of the situation, concealing nothing and pointed out that unless the princes acted wisely, they faced extinction. This was followed by an im-

pressive speech by C.P. strongly endorsing my arguments. His address of about one hour in duration was a model of eloquence and statesmanship. Many wondered why he supported my views. When we broke up for lunch, C. P. came to me and said: 'You were quite right; unless the princes stand together now, all will be lost.' Thinking this the best opportunity to sound his views, I talked to him at length. C.P. revealed that he spoke out so strongly in order to forestall any move by the Nawab of Bhopal to ask for plenipotentiary status as a negotiator instead of entrusting the task to a committee. C.P. was not prepared to entrust the States's future to Bhopal. I was equally determined to prevent this. It was then that C.P. revealed the second line of his thinking. He wanted ten of the major Hindu States to form a solid bloc to safeguard their interests. He had already mooted the idea to Cochin, Mysore and Baroda and if Bikaner and Jodhpur would also join, he would guarantee the rest. In other words, he wanted all of us to make him our attorney, a propcsal which was anathema to me. I would not have objected if the proposal had come from a minister less egoistic or authoritarian. If Krishnamachari for instance offered to lead in such a situation, most people would have agreed. I knew that the princes too would nct agree to delegate such authority to C.P.

The immediate need was to counter Bhopal's tactics. I agreed therefore to speak to the Maharajah about C.P.'s suggestion and concurred with his proposition that ten major Hindu States should join forces under a common leader. Since C. P. did not stake any personal claim to leadership yet, I did not have to promise support for such a resolution. C. P. was pleased at my quick acceptance of his proposal .

The afternoon session was attended by the Maharajah of Gwalior and the Nawab of Rampur. After some trivialities, the Nawab of Rampur stood up to exhort the princes to show unity and discipline, to eschew jealousy and rivalry and to work under a single leader. Although the speech was non-committal, C. P. gave me a significant look, hinting that more was to come. Other princes then echoed Rampur and after

about one hour, the Maharajah of Gwalior came out with the proposal that since everyone was agreed on undivided leadership, there was no need for a Committee to negotiate and instead the Chancellor could be entrusted with full powers. For a time nobody spoke. Seeing the princes' hesitation, C. P. intervened: 'The idea is good but since Travancore is not in the Chamber, I will have to stay out if such plenipotentiary powers are given to its Chancellor.' Pulla Reddi took up the same position on behalf of Mysore. Then Bikaner summoned courage to say unequivocally that he was not agreeable to entrust the fate of all of them to a single person, however eminent. Thus Bhopal's manoeuvre fell to the ground. My resolution that the princes and ministers should select a strong negotiating committee to deal with the Indian leaders and the British government was accepted by everyone during the evening. The meeting dispersed authorizing the princes to decide on names by mutual consultation.

The general view was that in addition to princes, the committee should include the Dewans of Hyderabad, Mysore, Baroda, Kashmir, Patiala, Travancore and Bikaner. Of these only C. P., Liaquat Hayat and I had been continously engaged in constitutional discussions from the first Round Table Conference. B. L. Mitter of Baroda had been in office for a bare six months. Sir B. N. Rau of Kashmir was also new to Indian States. Pulla Reddi and H. S. Mallick were I.C.S. officers whose training and experience were confined to British India. Consequently people like the Jam Saheb and Patiala insisted that I should be in the committee. This was the cue for Bhopal to come out into the open against me. Perhaps C.P., who was satisfied by spiking the Nawab's guns, had incited this move. The Maharajah of Bikaner somehow got wind of the C.P.-Bhopal plot and protested warmly that if I was excluded he would even resign from the Chamber since he had no confidence in a committee packed with officials from British India. Although there was no one to support Bhopal, he used his position as Chancellor to press his opposition to me and even canvassed the Jam Saheb to this end.

As a last resort, Bhopal decided to call on the Maharajah of Bikaner in person and on 3 May he arrived unannounced at the Bikaner Palace on Napean Sea Road. Their conversation lasted for two hours and centred round his complaints that I was working against him. The Maharajah had no difficulty in answering him, even without any help from me.

All this took place without my knowledge. I only knew from the Jam Saheb that the Nawab of Bhopal was rabidly opposed to me. I also gathered that he was trying to exclude me from the negotiating committee. But none of my friends revealed the arguments used by Bhopal for his purpose, nor did I ever imagine Bhopal would demand my dismissal from princely circles! It was only after Bhopal's infructuous visit that the Maharajah of Bikaner called me and revealed the entire story.

Why did Sardul Singh support me so strongly ? In the first place, he took it as a personal affront that his Dewan and adviser should be excluded. Secondly, since he aspired for prominence in the future constitutional set-up, he needed my services as adviser at this stage. Lastly, the conviction of Hindu princes like the Jam Saheb that Bhopal was leaning to the Muslim side and only a man impervious to his influence could check him helped me. In the event, Bhopal's efforts failed.

17

The Question of Accession

In March 1946 three senior members of the British Cabinet arrived in India with authority from the British government to confer on the procedure for transfer of power. They came determined to succeed in the mission. British leaders like Cripps wished to find a solution reconciling the separatist Muslim League and the Congress which wanted a democratic government for united India. Bhopal's stand was that apart from Hindus and Muslims, there was a third force in India, namely the princes and that he should be treated as its leader on an equal footing with Gandhiji and Jinnah. The first proposal was to divide Hindustan and Pakistan and to set up a confederate government to handle essential common subjects. Bhopal proposed that a 'Rajastan' should be added to Hindustan and Pakistan. He formulated his proposal at a secret conference held at his palace that the Indian States should unite into such a third State to be on a par with Pakistan and Hindustan. This idea was also favoured by Hyderabad and C. P. who then represented Travancore.

Knowing well that Bhopal was a pillar of the Muslim League, I had no difficulty in guessing the inner motivation behind the plan. Firstly, since most of the Indian States were geographical enclaves within Hindustan, their segregation would clearly weaken Hindustan. Secondly, if such a union of States came about, its leadership would naturally fall on the Nizam. This would not only reinforce the Muslim States like Hyderabad but also increase Muslim influence in the ultimate confederate government at the centre. Hamidulla Khan, who was inimical to the Hindus, wanted to curtail the power of the Hindus in independent India.

The State of Bhopal is a tiny island in a Hindu ocean. Ninety per cent of its population are Hindus. The Nawab realized that if India became free, his dynasty would soon be dispossessed. Hyderabad also faced the same problem. Accordingly, Hamidullah entered into a compact with the Nizam whereby the former agreed to use the Chamber to rally Hindu princes to undermine Hindu power in India and the government of Hyderabad was to finance this devious scheme. Thus Bhopal came forward as the standard bearer for Hyderabad.

C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar came to the aid of this unholy pair. I do not know what prompted this proclaimed leader of Hindus and exponent of Hindu culture who governed a Hindu State and rejoiced in the title *Vedavedanta Vignothama*[1] to become the proponent of this Muslim lobby. Until his ultimate ejection from Travancore, C.P. was not only in the Bhopal camp, but I am confident that he helped them with money and advice.

The other main power supporting this group was the hitherto powerful Political Department whose head, Sir Conrad Corfield, was anxious to weaken an independent India by any means. His constant advice to the princes was that they should line up behind Bhopal and strengthen his hands in the negotiations. Since he proclaimed this openly, many Hindu princes who considered the Political Department their patron saint became tools of Bhopal. All these factors combined to give Bhopal undisputed sway over the Princes' Chamber.

But he did not enjoy this status in the ministerial committee appointed to advise the Chamber on constitutional matters. Bhopal's pre-eminence there was foiled by the presence of Mirza Ismail, Krishnamachari and myself. The executive of the Chamber used to sit jointly with the Committee of Ministers to decide on all issues of importance. It was at such a joint sitting that the Nawab of Bhopal first aired his demand that India should be divided into three units and if that was done, 'Rajastan' would perhaps surpass Hindustan and Pakistan in the new set-up. Krishnamachari was absent that day. We had no chance of consulting each other. When the princes,

there assembled cheered this proposal and the Hyderabad minister nodded assent, Bhopal concluded that his case was won. The Maharajah of Bikaner said nothing. When Bhopal confidently looked round, assuming that a consensus had been established, I got up.

It was then half past twelve. My intention was merely to prevent any final decision being taken before lunch. My argument was that the 'Rajastan' scheme was dangerous and would be taken by the Indian public and especially the States' subjects as an act of betrayal and moreover it would serve only to strengthen Muslims and antagonize the Congress. If Rajastan was to be a single unit, it was obvious that the princes would have to surrender their powers to it. If so, what would be the fate of the princes? What further voice would they have in any constitutional decisions? Would the people of Mysore or Travancore be allied to their near neighbours in British India or the people of distant Rajputana? If the people of the States did not approve of such a union, what purpose would be served by a princely decision at this time when popular government was imminent everywhere? Such a move would merely boomerang on the princely order. After thus refuting the Bhopal proposal from many angles, I referred to the criticism that it was a plan to consolidate Muslim power. Bhopal's expression changed. I prefaced my argument by saying that all of us knew that the Nawab's patriotism was untainted by communal prejudice and hence I did not even dream that he was motivated by any communal bias in promoting his scheme, but the end effect of his proposal, even if unintentional, would be to strengthen the Muslims. Out of the 148 princes left in India, except for seven or eight, all the rest were Hindus. Even among them, if Bhawalpur, Kherpur and Kelat were excluded, all the others were enclaves in Hindustan. Moreover, even in these Muslim-ruled States within Hindustan (Hyderabad, Bhopal, Junagadh, Rampur) more than seventy-five per cent of the people were Hindus. Consequently, the establishment of a new group called 'Rajastan' would be a vivisection of Hindu power, and if Hindu princes were party

be unpatriotic. Any historian will endorse the statement that Indian princes had never enjoyed full sovereignty. Even the premier States of Hyderabad, Baroda, Mysore, Gwalior and Kashmir were never wholly independent. The other States had only an inferior status. Consequently, what could be sillier than imagining that they would become independent monarchs immediately British paramountcy lapsed? When nationalist feelings were sweeping the country, which State subjects would come forward to fight for these dear monarchs? Since the people of the Indian States had also fought for India's freedom, which wizard could now hold them back from that freedom?

I continued to propagate these views in writing and most of the princes came to accept them. But three States, important because of size, strongly opposed my views. C. P. Ramaswami was the leader of this opposition. C.P.'s argument was that Travancore was resolved in any event to be independent, that the control of the government of India over Travancore would end with the transfer of British power and that the United Nations had member States smaller in size than Travancore, so that no one could negative the claim of independence on the ground of size. I told the princes that the people of Travancore would themselves give him a fitting reply at the right time and save the State and its Maharajah from the stewardship of this *Sachivottama*.[2]

The Constituent Assembly met in Delhi as planned. When he saw that the Muslim League did not join it, Bhopal thought his plans had failed. Only if the League and the Congress wrangled could a third force try to hold the balance of power and he could gain its leadership. My view was that irrespective of the League's decision to join or abstain the Indian States should not keep out. Krishnamachari supported this view. Accordingly the Maharajah of Bikaner pressed Bhopal time and again to start negotiations with the Congress leaders. The invariable answer was that the Congress was not willing; he had approached them several times but Nehru did not want any discussions at present. This answer astounded me. Nehru's adviser on state matters at that time was Gopalaswami Iyengar.

From our almost daily contacts, the impression I gained was the opposite.

I went home for Christmas as usual in 1946 and on my return spent a day in Madras. It was 12 January. As Gopalaswami Iyengar was in Madras, I decided to meet him and ascertain the true state of affairs. It was then that I discovered Bhopal's duplicity. Gopalaswami told me without hesitation that Nehru had invited Bhopal several times to discuss the question of joining the Constituent Assembly but that Bhopal had invariably resiled from all such proposals. I then asked if the Congress was ready to leave out Bhopal and negotiate with the other princes. He replied that there seemed no other alternative.

As soon as I reached Delhi I met Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and consulted him on this subject. His advice was that informal discussions could start between the Congress and the princes, but should be confidential and no announcement made until agreement was reached. I reported to the Maharajah at Bikaner and we decided to call together all the main Hindu princes around Delhi. Jaipur, Jodhpur, Patiala, Rewa and Bikaner took part. By the end of the month these five princes and their representatives were to meet the Congress leaders and finalize the arrangements for participation in the Constituent Assembly. I was instructed to see to this.

When I returned to Delhi, Gopalaswami had also come back. By our joint efforts, it was arranged that Nehru, Patel, Azad and Gopalaswami would come on the night of 31 January to dinner at Bikaner Palace. The Maharajah was pleased.

The Nawab of Bhopal had also called a conference at Delhi to decide on the attitude to the Constituent Assembly. The Muslim League was to meet at Karachi on the 29th under the presidentship of Jinnah. Everybody knew that the League would resolve that Muslims would not take part in the Constituent Assembly. If the princes would also simultaneously make a similar declaration, Bhopal and Jinnah expected that the Constituent Assembly then in session under the leadership of the Congress would be reduced to a mere party con-

ference. Consequently Bhopal convened his meeting of princes for the same day as the League's Karachi convention.

We assembled at eleven in the morning at the spacious hall of the Faridkot Palace in Delhi. The group known as the Bikaner group had already mapped out their strategy. Bhopal's first move was to push through a unanimous resolution setting out the principles the Congress leaders were to concede if the princes were to co-operate with them. The *sine qua non* for joining the Constituent Assembly included guarantees of the immutability of monarchy, the non-impairment of their powers, non-interference in the internal affairs of the States. As soon as we saw the draft resolution we realized that it was a ruse to block all negotiations with the Congress. The resolution was commended by C. P. Ramaswami and the newly appointed Dewan of Mysore, Ramaswami Mudaliar. Bhopal thought that because these two represented the most prominent Hindu States no one would accuse him of aiding the Muslim League. Mudaliar whose very religion was enmity to the Congress and C. P. whose arrogance spurred him to challenge the Congress, both supported Bhopal and attacked the Congress leaders. I was not surprised.

It was Sir T. Vijayaraghavachari of Udaipur who replied to them. Age and ill-health made it difficult for him even to stand up. The fiery speech that he made that day confounded the Bhopal group. He argued with power and eloquence that at a historic moment when India was to attain independence, the Indian princes should support this cause rather than obstruct it lest they should be totally destroyed and lest our descendants consider their action an unpardonable crime and they be regarded by the Indian people as an accursed tribe and their own kinsmen repudiate them. His peroration was: 'Whether you obstruct it or not, whether you oppose or support, freedom is coming to India. What you now contemplate is like the action of the foolish woman who tried to dam the Atlantic ocean with a broom; I have no hesitation in saying that if you adopt this resolution it will be your own death warrant.'

Krishnamachari and I followed, seconding what Vijayaraghavachari had said and criticizing Bhopal's policy. But we knew that we could not succeed in that assembly. The meeting adopted Bhopal's conditions although against our opposition. Since we had already decided on our counter strategy, we did not mind this defeat. Bhopal was elated by his victory achieved with the help of the two Ramaswamis. The anti-Hindu newspapers chortled over the imminent collapse of the Constituent Assmebly in the face of princely opposition. Nobody took very seriously *The Hindustan Times* report that princes like Bikaner would hold direct talks with the Congress.

On the 31st night, Nehru, Azad and Gopalaswami came to dinner as arranged. From our side, the Maharajahs of Bikaner and Patiala, the Prime Minister of Gwalior, Dewan Vijayaraghavachari of Udaipur, Dewan Krishnamachari of Jaipur, Dewan H. S. Mallick of Patiala, Dewan Venkatachar of Jodhpur, Dewan Jayaratnam of Rewa and I were present. The Maharajah of Bikaner prefaced the discussions with a short speech stating that he hoped that the day's consultations would terminate auspiciously, that the princes were one with the rest in desiring India's independence, for attaining which all parties should work in harmony. Nehru replied suitably. The Maharajah then asked Krishnamachari to take up the discussion but he turned the job over to me. My first point was to show that Bhopal's charges that the Congress leaders were averse to such consultations were false. When Nehru confirmed this, the princes were convinced. Before we sat down to dinner, Nehru openly revealed his mind by way of answer to my questions. The upshot of his talk was that the Congress was not going to solve any problem by force, that he did not wish to injure the princes, that whatever the future of the Indian States he would try to adjust matters so as to avoid harming the princes or their families. Under such conditions, the princes were agreeable to joining the Constituent Assembly. This is what took place at that historic dinner meeting.

The formal dicussions between the State representatives

and the Constituent Assembly committee opened on 8 February. The latter consisted of Nehru, Patel, Azad, Gopalaswami Iyengar and Pattabhi Sitaramayya. The former included the princes of Bhopal, Patiala, Nawanagar, Durgampur and Bilaspur as well as Sir Mirza Ismail (Hyderabad), Krishnamachari (Jaipur), Ramaswami Mudaliar (Mysore), C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar (Travancore), D. K. Sen (small States) and myself. Bhopal's stand was that unless the Congress leaders accepted the so-called Charter of Rights drawn up by him, which he claimed was approved by all princes and which sought to preserve their autocracy for all eternity, he could not discuss anything. The other side replied that they were deputed to discuss how the States could participate in the Constituent Assembly and it was beyond their competence to go outside this object and to discuss princely rights and powers. When a deadlock thus resulted, the Maharajah of Patiala called me and Krishnamachari outside and asked us how we could break it. At our suggestion, he then formally asked the Congress leaders: 'It is true that we have gathered to decide how State representatives can join the Constituent Assembly. But you are all-India leaders and we wish therefore to know what your attitude to the States is.'

Nehru then made a lengthy speech. Its purport was that the Congress did not intend solving any problem by force, that the Congress would not interfere in State affairs except with the consent of the princes and their subjects and that the need of the hour was for them both to join in building the edifice of Indian independence. Bhopal did not relish this at all. He reiterated that he had no au[illegible]ons unless the Charter of Rights w[illegible]d for the day.

We then worked out a plan. We knew that when the meeting opened, Bhopal would again raise his Charter demand. Before Nehru could answer him, the Maharajah of Patiala should ask if a summary of Nehru's earlier speech could be issued as a memorandum. Gopalaswami agreed to make this available. If this was done, Krishnamachari or I should immediately suggest that such a memorandum would meet Bhopal's case.

As soon as we assembled at ten, we explained the plan to the Maharajah of Patiala. Once the meeting commenced, Bhopal as expected brought up his poser. When the Maharajah of Patiala countered it with his question, Bhopal smelt a rat. When Nehru replied that he would give not a summary of his speech, but its full text, the Maharajah bluntly asked: 'What more assurances do we require?' The astute C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar saw the way the wind was blowing. Practised acrobat that he was, he made another somersault. He ditched Bhopal and came over to us. 'Quite right. There is no need to discuss rights any further. We need only decide on the method of entering the Constituent Assembly.'

We had thought about this and found our solution. The Constituent Assembly had one representative for every million people. We proposed that each State should have one member for every million of population. Gopalaswami and we had also proposed that very small States should be clubbed into joint constituencies to whom also the same ratio would apply. It was decided at least half the members would be elected directly or from legislatures. C. P. volunteered the assurance that of the six members from Travancore four would be elected.

Even though the Indian States thus agreed to go into the Constituent Assembly, Bhopal did not cease trying to subvert the agreement. He convened a sizeable meeting in Bombay and tried to push through a resolution that the princes should work in the Assembly only in unison. From our group only the Maharajah of Bikaner went to Bombay. When Bhopal moved his proposition, the Maharajah announced that he would not participate in the discussion, that he would be guided only by the interests of his State and he was not prepared to submit

to the wishes of other princes. He left the conference. Bhopal blamed the Maharajah's action and the consequent failure of his own plans on me.

Early in March the Bikaner Assembly deputed me to the Constituent Assembly. I was the first delegate from any Indian State. Within a week Krishnamachari and Hiralal Sastri of the Praja Mandal and a Thakur were chosen from Jaipur, Venkatachar and Narayan Vyas from Jodhpur as well as representatives of Udaipur, Patiala and Rewa. I was gratified with the success of my efforts to bring the States into the Constituent Assembly. On the other hand, C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, who volunteered to elect four out of six representatives from Travancore, proceeded to dissolve the state Legislative Assembly!

18

The Constituent Assembly

As it was widely known that in the April session of the Constituent Assembly, State representatives would also participate, the visitors' galleries were crowded with spectators. Although only sixteen of us sat in that historic session representing the States, the significance of the event lay in the importance of the States we represented. Baroda, Udaipur, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Patiala, Rewa and Cochin had sent representatives, who were either famous administrators like B. L. Mitter, Krishnamachari or Vijayaraghavachari or popular politicians like Hiralal Sastri, Darbar Gopaldas Desai and Panampalli Govinda Menon. President Rajendra Prasad took special care to receive us formally and give us appropriate places in the Assembly. Krishnamachari, Mitter and Vijayaraghavachari were inducted to the front bench, while on the second bench, behind and to the left of Nehru, I sat next to Vijayalakshmi Pandit. As soon as we were sworn in, Prasad made a short speech of welcome. Although Mitter of Baroda and Vijayaraghavachari of Udaipur were scheduled to reply, Prasad called my name immediately after Mitter. Thus my speech in the Assembly that day was impromptu, but I could see that it was well received.

It soon became routine to appoint Krishnamachari or me to all the major committees: I sat on the Committee on Fundamental Rights, the Committee on Minorities, the Committee on the Principles of the Constitution and the Committee on the National Flag. It goes without saying that of these the Committees on Fundamental Rights and Principles of the Constitution were the most important. I served diligently on them.

With the arrival of Lord Mountbatten the political atmosphere was transformed. As the Maharajah and Mountbatten were old acquaintances, I was able to get to know the new Viceroy at close quarters. Bhopal had told Mountbatten that I had complicated the princes' position. At our very first meeting he therefore asked me why instead of uniting the princely order I had divided it. I did not hesitate to answer the question. I detailed at some length the machinations of Bhopal and how he had worked to use the princes as a cat's paw to aid the Muslim cause, a position which was bound to cause irreparable harm to the Hindu princes. He listened noncommittally and in the end said: 'I have known Bhopal for 35 years. He struck me as intelligent and patriotic. It is therefore difficult for me to believe what you say. However, let us see.' In six months' time he saw.

After his preliminary study of the Indian situation, Mountbatten realized like everyone else that only partition would resolve the tangle. He recommended partition and brought forward the date for transfer of power to 15 August. When independence thus came ahead of schedule, the States problem again raised its head. The British government first advised that the States should cede foreign affairs, communications and defence to the Centre and the princes had agreed. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar made another turn-about and said that they had agreed to cede these only to an undivided India and since India was being partitioned, their offer lapsed and they reverted to full independence. Hyderabad strongly supported him and Mysore flirted with the idea for a while. Bhopal proclaimed that he also opted for independence and if his State was too small to be viable, he would join with neighbouring States to form a new State of 'Rajastan' to preserve their independence. The real threat to India did not arise from Hyderabad or C.P. Between Delhi and Pakistan, the vast hinterland between British India and Pakistan was littered with a miscellany of States. If these were welded into a single unit and he could play Pakistan against India, Bhopal calculated that he could not only weaken Hindustan but increase the influence

of the princes. There were in fact some Hindu princes also to support this policy, as for instance the Rajput princes of Durgampur, Pratapgarh and Narsingarh whom he misled. With the help of some Muslim officials he had also managed to suborn the Maharajah of Indore.

In the meantime C. P. asserted that Travancore would not surrender to anyone and would try to become a member of the United Nations, keeping out of the India-Pakistan dispute. He started secret negotiations with people in Britain and America opposed to Indian independence and recruited an army of mercenaries to purge his own opponents in Travancore. While no one was much alarmed by C.P.'s tall claims and posturings, it seemed advisable do some counter-propaganda. Hence Krishnamachari and I issued a joint statement demolishing his arguments. This merely inflamed his wrath. He launched an onslaught against the two of us and the resulting controversy dragged on for three months. Although neither Krishnamachari nor I pursued the matter, our views were openly endorsed and C.P. denounced by publicists of the stature of Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyar, Dr Ambedkar and Gopalaswami Iyengar. C.P. tried to abuse and discredit all of them in turn, thinking that I was the hidden hand behind the press attacks on him, and especially the articles against him in the Delhi papers.

At about this time C.P. held a press conference in Trivandrum and indulged in wholesale abuse of the Indian leaders. One of his sycophants asked whether he was aware that I had disavowed Travancore citizenship. In reply, C.P. let off another fusillade against me. It is true that I never had any special pride in being a Travancore citizen. I never had any special reverence for the Travancore royal family, nor did I ever look on the Maharajah as my gracious lord temporal. That I did not soft pedal on my views even during the heyday of princely power my historical work *Malabar and the Dutch* as well as my novel *The Dawn of Dhuma Ketu*[1] will show. But I was proud to be a Malayali though my patriotism was that of an Indian. I believed that the Travancore royal family was

by history opposed to Kerala tradition and in fact the dynasty itself was set up with the help of the Arcot Nawab and a mercenary force of Maravas and that they always leant on foreign rule. Obviously then I could have no sentimental regard for either the State or its royal family. I thought of the Travancore Maharajah merely as one of the six hundred odd princes in India.

When C. P.'s rogue elephant politics got worse, I was almost tempted to join the State Congress which put up a stout-hearted resistance to him. The State was full of rumours that I had resigned the Dewanship of Bikaner and started for home. When I suggested this step to Sardar Patel, he told me that there was no need for me to do any such thing and he would solve the Travancore problem himself. But T. M. Verghese, who was then conducting the State Congress propaganda in Delhi, thought otherwise. His idea was that if C.P.'s attitude did not change, a popular government should be set up in the State and C. P. ejected by force. If this was the tactic adopted, I agreed to join such a government. However, no such occasion arose. At the end of July, C.P. was attacked by an unknown assailant and departed the State, which immediately acceded to India.

The dispute with Bhopal had no such ending. As soon as 15 August was set as the date for India's assuming Dominion Status, Patel held a conference at his residence to determine how the States were to be incorporated in the Dominion. The official deputed to conduct negotiations for this purpose was V. P. Menon.

Vepali Pangunni Menon was a remarkable man. Starting with limited education and in a subordinate position, he climbed to the top of the official ladder. No one imagined at that time that he would be another sword of Parasurama and eliminate princely rule from India. I believe he entered service as stenographer to Edwin Montagu when the latter visited India. Menon's connection with constitutional reform dates from that day. When I met him first, he was a superintendent in the Home Department. Menon's abilities came to the fore

when he was made assistant secretary to the British Indian delegation to the Round Table Conference. Menon was the instigator of political negotiations during the term of Lord Wavell. He was also one of Mountbatten's principal advisers. When Mountbatten's task was done, it was V. P. whom Patel chose to be his lieutenant in dealing with the Indian States.

V.P. and I planned to draw up a model Instrument of Accession between the new Dominion and the States. In the first week of July he sent me a draft. Our idea was to show it first to the princes in our group and show it to others only after it secured their approval. As a result of frequent consultations in Bikaner Palace we were able to evolve an Instrument acceptable to Krishnamachari, myself and other ministers allied to us. Most of the objections came from Dewan Ramaswami Mudaliar of Mysore but they were not of much substance.

At the ensuing conference at the Viceregal Lodge, most of the princes told Mountbatten in person that they accepted this Instrument and we left Delhi on the understanding that *all willing States would sign the Instrument* by the first week of August. We were delighted with the progress.

But events proved our satisfaction to be premature. Bhopal's evil genius was not quite played out. As a last throw, he tried to tempt Jodhpur into joining with Pakistan. Jodhpur lies south of Bikaner and extends from Pakistan right up to Ajmer, which was of special importance to Muslims and was known as a rampart of Delhi. If Pakistan could reach up to Ajmer, Delhi would be in danger. Jodhpur was six times as large as Travancore and its princes, the senior branch of the Rashtrakoot line, were very influential in Rajasthan.

The Maharajah of Jodhpur had only recenlty come to the *gaddi* and was only 23 years old. Bhopal was trying to wean him away from India. At the meeting with Mountbatten, Jodhpur had agreed along with us to accede to India. Dewan Venkatachar was a leading member of our group. We therefore anticipated no trouble from that quarter.

On the morning of 6 August, a friend, Col. Kesari Singh,

arrived from Jodhpur with a letter, which opened our eyes to the gravity of the situation. As soon as we left Delhi, Bhopal had taken the Jodhpur Maharajah to meet Jinnah. Jinnah had offered to sign a treaty with Jodhpur as an independent sovereign State and also to allow Jodhpur to import arms through Karachi without duty. He had also offered Jodhpur the suzerainty of all Rajasthan if he thus associated himself with Pakistan. The Maharajah was dazzeld with the prospect of becoming a sort of emperor of all Rajasthan with the help of Pakistan. We cannot forget the historic role of the Rashtrakoots as the allies of the Muslims. It was an ancestor of the Jodhpur Maharajah who had invited Mohammed Ghori to India. In later times, the family won favour with the Mugals by offering their women in marriage to the emperors. The secret pact with Jinnah was thus quite in character.

Col. Kesari Singh was the Maharajah's secretary and had accompanied him to Jinnah's residence. Although he was not let into the full details of the pact, he could sense the treasonable nature of the whole conspiracy. When the Maharajah went with Bhopal on the second day to see Jinnah, the draft treaty was ready for signature. It was then that the Maharajah told Kesari Singh that he would thereby become the overlord of Rajasthan. Kesari Singh presuaded him not to sign at once but to consult his mother and other relations. He commended the scheme and suggested that it should be properly witnessed by another member of the prince's family. In the event the Maharajah came away promising to consult his family and sign the treaty on 8 August at Delhi and Kesari Singh also joined in the assurance.

On his return to Jodhpur, Kesari Singh reported to the Dewan. It was then that other details came out including the promise of support to Jodhpur from princes like Durgampur. Appalled by the nature of the conspiracy, Venkatachar sent word to me. Venkatachar's letter was a veritable bombshell and I could see no solution except through Sardar Patel at Delhi. The Maharajah of Bikaner agreed and gave me a letter to Mountbatten explaining the position and the dangerous implications

of the whole plot. Fortunately, Mountbatten had no difficulty in dissuading Jodhpur from this adventure.

15 August was the day set for India's independence. By the time I learned of the date, most of the ceremonial programme had been finalized. The original programme was that Lord Mountbatten would drive in state on the 15th morning at 10 a.m. to the Constituent Assembly and there formally proclaim India's independence. Immediately thereafter the tricolour was to be hoisted over the building. I felt this was not quite right. According to the British Parliament, British power in India would terminate at midnight on 14 August. My opinion was that we should take over at that exact time. When I suggested this to Sarojini Naidu, she agreed with me that we should proclaim Indian independence at a midnight session but advised me that we could now alter the programme only by a direct approach to Nehru. Although I spoke to some others about this, they took it lightly. In the end I decided to make the direct approach and sent Nehru a short note in the Constituent Assembly setting out my proposal. He read my note and said: 'I like your suggestion, but two of my colleagues go to bed promptly at nine.' They were Patel and Azad. I answered: 'I will take care of that and provide two beds for them at Parliament House', in the same vein.

The next day in the Assembly, Nehru called me and said that the Cabinet approved my suggestion and I was invited to the Cabinet committee to finalize details. The historic midnight session of the Constituent Assembly came about in this manner. When the Assembly was in session, Dewan Chamanlal in his broadcast speech referred to me by name as 'Here comes the proponent of this midnight session.' This was how my role in the affair was revealed to the world.

19

Ticket to Pakistan

When India attained independence and princely rule was replaced by popular governments, I realized that my twenty-year service in the Indian States had ended. My intention was to resign from Bikaner and depart in the New Year. There was a temporary interruption. A few days before Independence Day, Nehru asked me to join the first delegation from free India to the United Nations Assembly scheduled to meet in New York at the end of September. I deemed this a great honour. The delegation led by Mrs Vijayalakshmi Pandit consisted of five members, Raja Maharaj Singh, Justice Fazal, M. C. Setalvad and myself in addition to the leader. As alternates B. Shiva Rao, Dr P. P. Pillai, B. R. Sen and others came with M. K. Vellodi as Secretary-General, as well as official advisers and secretaries. We were instructed to leave from Bombay on 11 September. Since this had been arranged before Independence Day, I expected I could withdraw from my Bikaner duties immediately thereafter.

But even on 16 August the picture had changed. The air was thick with rumours that divided Punjab was the scene of riots and mass killings on a scale not conceivable to any one. It took a day or two to get an accurate assessment. We learned that in West Punjab and the Frontier Province of Pakistan Muslims were massacring Hindus and Sikhs, while in East Punjab and States like Patiala and Alwar Hindus and Sikhs were returning the compliment, sparing neither women, nor children nor old folk. The riots spread like wild fire. Armed gangs entered the villages or areas where opponents lived, killing, burning and abducting. India and Pakistan celebrated their independence in this atmosphere of bloodshed and bestiality.

The whole of the Punjab was involved in this blood-bath. As Bikaner adjoined Pakistan on the west while it was bounded on the north and east by the Punjab, I feared the riots might spread to us. If Bikaner succumbed, I felt certain that communal strife would soon extend right up to Bombay. My one concern was thus to prevent the riots spreading to Bikaner, whatever the cost. But this was not easy. Refugees from Bahwalpur entered Bikaner by the thousand and our people learned that *in that limb of Pakistan Hindus were being hunted like animals* and forcibly converted. Hindus in Bikaner were excited. Thirteen per cent of Bikaner's population was Muslim, mostly poor people dependant on Hindus. But local Hindus feared their women and children would never be safe so long as these Muslims were there and argued that events in Bahwalpur called for retaliation. Muslims panicked and started fleeing to Pakistan. I was determined that the government in Bikaner would not permit any injury to Muslim citizens and if necessary would deploy the army to put down riots. Providentially, perhaps, not a single Muslim was killed in Bikaner. In fact, thinking Bikaner a haven four and a half lakh Muslims took refuge there. I managed to transport them unhindered to Pakistan under police protection. The government of India commended us for halting the riots at the Punjab border and preventing their spread southward.

On the northern and eastern borders of Bikaner about one and a half lakh Muslims had gathered with their families and household goods and cattle. We could not guess what would happen if they entered the State. If they were to be given safe passage to Pakistan, it would entail a 200-mile march. I wanted to take advice from Delhi on this problem but it was difficult to reach Delhi. No trains were running. The railway line up to Raewadi (fifty miles from Delhi) passed through Bikaner and I decided to engage a special train with armed escort. At that time R.S.S. workers were entering trains and killing everyone who looked like a Muslim. The Maharajah insisted that I should therefore remove my

beard. Thus, at the palace itself I had to get rid of the goatee I had worn for many years!

The killing frenzy had reached Delhi too. Two days before my arrival there, it was rumoured that over ten thousand Muslims had been massacred. It was unsafe to walk the streets of Delhi. After taking advice, I departed from Delhi on the 14th evening, with an armed guard for my saloon and a posse of railway armed police to protect the train. My youngest daughter Radha, then sixteen and reading for her B. A. in Delhi, accompanied me.

We reached Raewadi station on the Bikaner border as usual at nine in the evening. The platform was deserted. The guard of our train advised that the journey be halted for the night and I agreed. The first thing I saw in the morning was a group of volunteers with swords arguing with the police inspector escorting my party. On enquiry I was told that the leader of these volunteers wanted my saloon to be shifted from the middle of the train to its end. The inspector said that violent attacks were anticipated after two stations and the saloon would be exposed. At this stage the volunteer captain came to me and saluted. He seemed about twenty-eight or thirty years old. In appearance he was like any minor government official and in no way the leader of a murder gang. He saluted me with his open sword and said: 'Please forgive the inconvenience. If your saloon stays in the middle, the mob may damage it. Please therefore shift it to the back.' I said I had no objection. 'What is happening?' I asked. 'I trust you will do nothing against the law.' 'Oh no, nothing illegal,' he replied. 'I have merely planned to sell 1500 tickets to Pakistan from a nearby station.' 'What, tickets to Pakistan!' I exclaimed. 'Yes, tickets to Pakistan.'

The train slowly got under way. We reached Mahendragarh station in Patiala without incident. It was then that I learned the whole story. About 1500 Muslims, mostly women, old people and children, had gathered on the platform. The Patiala army had surrounded the station to prevent them from fleeing. They looked like lambs awaiting slaughter. No human

heart could remain unmoved by their plight. While none of them had any hopes of life left, their faces were distorted by fear and grief. Women clasping children to their breasts, tearful old men praying with eyes closed, bewildered children, fatalists counting their prayer beads, were some of the pictures I saw. As soon as the train's whistle sounded, people from adjacent villages ran up, seizing a variety of arms. They climbed to the roof of the train. The army forced the Muslims into the trains. Waverers were prodded with spears. It took half an hour to pack them all into the train. The volunteer captain went round inciting the troops, and exclaiming: 'Why do you hesitate, you are going to Pakistan!'

Slowly the train resumed its journey. From villages on either side armed gangs ran behind it. Two men on horseback rode on either side shouting victory slogans. One of them was swinging a hatchet. Jaipur Pali, the next station, was only eight miles away but it took us an hour and a quarter to reach it.

Jaipur Pali station stands on a mountain cleft. A hundred yards on each side the hills begin. On this seven-mile gap, we could see people lined up at the foothills at intervals of about fifty feet. The train reached the station. Although it was scheduled to stop only for one minute, it did not move. After a few minutes, I could hear screams. People were being dragged out of the train and slaughtered. The mob was wielding curved knives attached to long bamboo canes and was slashing away at the people coming out of the train. There was no anger or cruelty in their faces, but only a stern resolve. I could hear intermittent cries of '*Bharat mata ki jai*'[1] and '*Hindu dharma ki jai*'.[2] It is hard even to imagine such butchery. I was amazed that men could be so devoid of mercy or fellow feeling.

Now and then one could see frantic human beings and aged women running blindly to save their lives. The butchers in the station never turned to look. It was then that I realized with a shock what the line of sentries on the foothills signified. There was no escape in flight.

The volunteer captain approached the police inspector at intervals and reported: 'We have despatched 500. Now it is

1000' and so on. Although this murder chief passed by me several times, I could not bring myself to speak to him. However, when after a particularly gruesome killing, a young man shouted: '*Mahatma Gandhi ki jai*',[3] I lost my temper. But what could I do? I sent for the volunteer captain. He came and saluted. 'It is all over, sir. There are no more of the children of Satan left here,' he announced happily. I said: 'I didn't call you to ask about that. I am unable to stop your crime, but why do you call Mahatma Gandhi's name during this atrocity? Stop that at least.' 'Certainly', he replied and went away. He ordered his men to stop calling Gandhiji's name during their blood-bath.

In an hour and a half the carnage ended. What followed was worse. The ruffians had no shame or compunction in stealing the bloodstained clothes of their victims and removing the ornaments of the dead women after hacking at their limbs. It was an unbearable sight. Women between the ages of twelve and forty were not killed but they were seized and led away. What was most piteous was the way they were weeping and leaning on their captors trying to save their lives at least. I saw only one young woman who attempted to run, crying: 'You may kill me, I won't come with you.'

By noon this heinous crime was ended. When the train moved on, we could see dead bodies on either side for miles. They were the ones who had tried to get away.

Yet this was a comparatively minor incident. What happened in West Punjab was reportedly worse. But that is no excuse. Who could imagine that Mother India would be pleased by such bloodshed? What a humiliation for the Mahatma who had waged a spiritual struggle based on non-violence and for the Indian National Congress! To the Hindu tradition resting on the thrice invoked *Shantih*, *Shantih*, *Shantih*[4] this interval of uncontrolled bestiality will remain a standing disgrace. The rampage of the beast culminated in the murder of Mahatma Gandhi.

20

America

As soon as the Punjab riots showed signs of abatement, the Maharajah permitted me to leave for the U.N. session. Although the Assembly had begun, the government of India considered it urgent for me to go and I therefore left Delhi on 20 September arriving in New York on the 25th. While I was held up, Dr B. C. Roy was alternating for me.

I have already said our delegation was headed by Mrs Pandit. She was admittedly one of the world's most distinguished women, even though she was not gifted with the intelligence, personal magnetism, oratory or forcefulness of Sarojini Naidu. This was not to be wondered at, for where in the world, leave alone India, could you find a peer for Sarojini Devi in the past hundred years? Leaving aside Mrs Naidu, few will gainsay that Mrs Pandit was esteemed the first lady of India.

Her personal beauty was renowned. During the U.N. Assembly session many people came from all over America just to see her. Trained from childhood under Motilal and later Jawaharlal, politics and administration were familiar to her. She had served as Minister of Education in the United Provinces in the first Congress ministry and afterwards in 1946. India's successful challenge to South Africa at the first U.N. Assembly session was recognized as being largely the result of her diplomacy and eloquence. She was appointed Ambassador to the Soviet Union because of her unique abilities.

Vijayalakshmi had become a widow three or four years earlier. Her late husband Ranjit Pandit was a great scholar in English and Sanskrit. He had produced some exquisite English translations of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*,[1] Sudraka's *Mrucchakatika*[2] and Kalidasa's *Ritusamhara*.

She was then less than fifty years old. Although we were

old acquaintances, I first worked at close quarters with her only at the Constituent Assembly meetings, where we had adjacent seats on the same bench. I learned later that I had been included in the U.N. delegation at her instance.

The other members of our delegation were also interesting personalities. After Vijayalakshmi the foremost among us was Raja Sir Maharaj Singh. Raja Harnam Singh of the Kapurthala royal family espoused Christianity and forewent his claims to succession, voluntarily staying outside the State. All his children reached eminence in life. Maharaj Singh was the eldest of them. The second, Sir Dilip Singh distinguished himself as a judge of the Lahore High Court for years. Their only sister was the celebrated Rajkumari Amrit Kaur. As a devoted follower of Gandhi and later Health Minister in the government of India, she came to the front rank of Indian leadership. Maharaj Singh occupied with success the posts of Minister in the U.P., Dewan of Jodhpur and Indian High Commissioner in South Africa. Maharaj Singh used to go to bed at seven, get up at four and kept no contact with other members of the delegation. Nearly seventy at the time, he still treated Vijayalakshmi like the little girl she was when he first knew her. She found this rather trying! There are no titles in America and his chauffeur used to address Maharaj Singh as Mister Singh. A secretary advised the man to observe the proprieties and address him as Raja. Whereupon the man obligingly called his passenger, 'Mister Raja Singh.' Maharaj Singh was a skilled ventriloquist and used to hold a doll in each hand and conduct a triangular conversation. He was always willing to demonstrate this trick.

Of the alternate members, the chief was B. Shiva Rao, the youngest of four brilliant brothers. B. Sanjiva Rao, B. Narasinga Rao and B. Rama Rao were the elders. I did not know Sanjiva Rao. Narasinga Rao was the architect of India's new Constitution. Constitutional adviser to the government, his legal acumen was prodigious. B. Rama Rao made a name in the I.C.S. and went on to occupy high positions as Deputy High Commissioner in London, High Commissioner in South

Africa, Ambassador to Russia and for a short spell, Ambassador to America. He later became Governor of the Reserve Bank of India. Shiva Rao however won no laurels as an official. He entered politics as a pupil of Mrs Besant, but when she was displaced from the political arena by the advent of Gandhiji, Shiva Rao went into the Trade Union Movement. He went to the Round Table Conference in that capacity. Thereafter he was engaged in journalism. As the Delhi correspondent of *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Hindu*, he enjoyed a prominent position in journalistic circles. A patriot, well versed in world affairs, he had friendly contacts with American editors, which proved to be a boon to us. Besides me, there were three Malayalis in the delegation. They were the Secretary-General, M. K. Vellodi; Dr P. P. Pillai, alternate delegate; and M. Gopala Menon, assistant secretary. Vellodi was an I.C.S. official who made a mark during the War as Textile Controller. He had afterwards been Deputy High Commissioner in London and acted as High Commissioner before joining our delegation. Independent, intelligent, forthright and good humoured, he was a true Kerala aristocrat. Since he was also a lover of literature, I found his company a delight.

Dr P. P. Pillai was India's permanent representative at the U.N. In his youth, he was involved in Travancore politics along with Changanacherry Parameswaran Pillai. Then he left for further education in England and subsequently took a post with the League of Nations in Geneva. From 1927 he was the Indian representative at the I.L.O. Since he was now posted at New York, he did not stay with us in the hotel. I knew him from old but since our lives were widely separated, we were not very close associates.

Gopala Menon was an official of the External Affairs department. A competent and active young man, he was looking after all our paper work.

The Assembly met at Lake Success thirty miles away from New York. It was a location of great beauty. After leaving the city, one had to traverse a highway flanked by gardens in

order to reach Lake Success. The plant life and flowers on either side were a riot of colour and everything that artifice could do to enhance the charms of nature had been bestowed on that parkway.

These colours changed from day to day. At the end of September, the leaves had not completely shed their green. It was as if nature was clothed in fresh garments each day. I have seen the beauty of the Mediterranean coast, the Himalayan peaks, the Kashmir valley and the noted gardens of England and France. Even so I did consider the scenic beauty of this park very remarkable.

Once you leave New York, the density of motor traffic on the roads is probably ten times that of London or Paris. The Assembly met at eleven, but since the motor journey took three quarters of an hour, we had to leave the city at ten in the morning. From nine to ten we used to confer. On most evenings it would be six when we returned and sometimes as late as eleven in the night.

I reached New York at eight one morning but managed to attend the morning's conference. Mrs Pandit and Vellodi explained my duties to me. I was to serve on the second and third committees as India's principal representative and on the first committee as Mrs Pandit's alternate. I started the same day.

Mrs Pandit was due to meet the Russian delegate Vyshinsky that afternoon at four. Since there were some important points to cover, I was asked to accompany her. I was also anxious to meet Vyshinsky whose forensic feats were a byword. When we reached the Soviets' residence it was nearly five. Vyshinsky was friendly, and in contrast to his unending verbosity before political assemblies he was sparing of words in private life. In public he was aggressive, but he talked to us with mellow humour.

My duties on the committees were not very onerous. My colleagues included Mrs Roosevelt, Dr Lang of Poland, Florence Paton of England and others. Mrs Roosevelt was very friendly. I was invited to and did visit her at her residence at Hyde Park some eighty miles out of New York. She was known

not only as the widow of the late President but as one of the world's three most influential women. If asked to name the three, most people would name Mrs Sarojini Naidu, Madam Sun Yat Sen and Mrs Roosevelt. Tall, buxom, plain featured, careless of fashion, she was a maternal figure and even at 65 in robust health. After fifteen years in a seat of power far above any of the world's empresses, this gracious woman had no trace of conceit or self importance. Her only concern was the world's good. Her life was devoted to the care of orphans, health of the underprivileged and betterment of workers all over the world.

When inviting me to Hyde Park she added that my colleagues would also be welcome. I therefore went for lunch one Sunday along with Shiva Rao and his wife. Before going to Mrs Roosevelt's comparatively small house, we visited President Roosevelt's official residence, his library and grave.

My various duties kept me in New York for nearly two months. Since Mrs Pandit had entrusted me with work on three different committees, I had little spare time. Suddenly one day, she received an urgent message from Nehru. This was a time when India's involvement in Kashmir led to a confrontation with Pakistan and prejudiced many great powers against us. The message instructed her to meet the Secretary of State, General Marshall, and explain the whole background. Mrs Pandit told me that she was not fully informed on Kashmir and that I should undertake this job. Marshall was at the time unwell and in hospital. It was Lois Henderson, later Ambassador to India, who came to see us as Marshall's aide. These vital discussions took place between him, Mrs Pandit and myself. In the course of our conversation lasting an hour and a half, I explained the early history of Kashmir and the background of Pakistani infiltration and mischief which compelled India to intervene.

I could foresee that the Kashmir problem would drag on for a long time and would lead to many misconceptions, besides poisoning our relations with Pakistan. I therefore suggested to Mrs Pandit that it would be useful to circulate

a memorandum on this subject among U.N. delegates. With her consent I drafted it and sent it to all foreign delegations accredited to the Assembly.

Although the session extended to the beginning of December, I returned to India by 17 November as soon as my work on the committees was over. I had to stop over in London for two days. At V. K. Krishna Menon's insistence, I held a press conference at India House on Kashmir affairs and talked to newspapermen for two hours.

I spent only two days in London but I was fortunate enough to glean some vital intelligence there. The younger son of the Nizam, Muazamjha, was staying in the same hotel as I—the Savoy. I chanced to run into his doctor, Colonel Vaghrey, a friend of mine, in the hotel lobby. From the talk we had, I was able to infer that the Nizam's government was plotting against India. Colonel Vaghrey told me that the government of Hyderabad was acquiring arms through an agent called Sydney Cotton and was buying aircraft in England for transporting these weapons to Hyderabad. Pakistan was also helping. Although a Hindu, he was an intimate friend of the Nizam's sons and had come by all this information through them.

On 22 November I reached Delhi at noon. Since the Constituent Assembly was sitting, I went to the House after lunch and gave a full report on the Hyderabad matter to Sardar Patel. Normally impassive, I saw him moved to anger for the first time. He only said: 'We will see to it.' When I read the press announcements next day that all planes coming from Pakistan to India were to land at Delhi or Bombay for inspection and any aircraft infringing these regulations would be shot down, I realized that he had taken my report to heart.

21

Another Change of Course

The Maharajah's birthday fell on 25 November. I wished to attend the celebrations and to use the occasion for installing a popular government in the State along lines already approved by him. This was the reason why I had left America earlier than originally planned. On my arrival in Delhi I learned that the birthday celebrations had been postponed and that the new popular administration could be set up only by January. In any case, I wished to relinquish my post without further delay.

On 12 December there was a meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Constituent Assembly under the chairmanship of Pandit Nehru. When we broke up, the Prime Minister invited me to go with him in his car. Mrs Pandit was also with him. As soon as the car was in motion, Nehru opened the conversation with the question: 'Are you willing to serve abroad?' I replied: 'Once I leave Bikaner, I don't mind.' 'When can you leave Bikaner?' he asked. I explained that the administrative reforms there would be fully under way by April and there would be no need for me to stay after that date. Our conversation ended there.

The same evening I was having dinner with Sir Girija Shankar Bajpai at his residence. We were alone. It was then that I learned that Nehru's idea was to send me as Ambassador to China. Soon the news got round. I obtained the Maharajah's permission to resign in the beginning of April.

When this was settled, I wanted to meet Sarojini Naidu and give her all the news. I have already mentioned that she had an almost motherly affection for me. Because of our long friendship of more than 25 years, I often used to seek her advice. During the Constituent Assembly session, I used to go to her residence at nine in the morning and take her to Parliament House in

my car. My continued contacts with Congress leaders were made through her. When Nehru asked her to take on the governorship of the United Provinces, she was not very happy. It was at my persuasion that she eventually agreed.

When in Delhi, Mrs Naidu used to stay in the Curzon Road house of Sir Shankar Lal. Every day people used to gather in the mornings and evenings for political and literary discussions. Since no one came to Delhi without paying Sarojini Naidu a visit, the place became a kind of conference hall, presided over by one who was the goddess of language incarnate. Because of the affection and admiration she commanded, these Curzon Road seminars were a festival of the mind.

Although her residence was thus almost a place of pilgrimage to her votaries, the permanent devotees were four or five of us. Foremost among them was Dr Syed Hussain who became Ambassador to Egypt and died there. The others were Dr Lojia Loon, the Chinese Ambassador to India, the Maharani of Nabha, Saroj Kaur and myself—Sarojini Naidu used to call us her 'family'.

At that time Mrs Naidu was 65 years in age. Although her health was far from good, her brilliant mind was undimmed and her wit and celebrated conversational gifts as keen as ever. Recovering after a heart attack, she left her sick bed without the knowledge of her doctors to preside over the Asian Conference and gave a scintillating address lasting for an hour and a half. She continued to take care over her clothes and jewellery. One of her most endearing traits was her frank enjoyment of varied cuisine. She relished the northerners' *halwa*[1] and other sweets as well as the *sambar*[2] and *rasam*[3] of the southerners and the *rasgulla*[4] of the Bengalis. Since her friends were always sending parcels of these delicacies to her, it was possible to sample a wide range of Indian cuisine at her residence.

Sarojini Devi left Delhi on 13 August to take up the post of Governor. The railway station was more crowded than ever that day. Syed Hussain, Ambassador Lojia Loon and I went to the station together. It was very difficult to approach her

saloon, but with the help of the police, we did succeed. By that time, Nehru had also arrived. When people saw the two of them together, a storm of cheering broke out. Everyone could see tears in Sarojini's eyes. When the train was leaving, she said to me: 'If you don't come to see me in Lucknow ...' That was all I could hear.

It was in pursuance of this injunction that I went to see her in January, along with Dr Lojia Loon. V. K. Krishna Menon was also in the same plane. The two days I stayed in Lucknow constituted one of the pleasantest occasions in my life. I say this not because of the gubernatorial hospitality lavished on us. I somehow had a premonition that this was the last time I would see that great woman. While she appeared the same as ever, the light she radiated seemed that of a setting sun. I rejoice that I was able to spend those two days in her company.

In mid-January, Mountbatten visited Bikaner. Knowing as I did that monarchy was dying in India, it was strange to find the Maharajah refurbishing his prestige by celebrating the Governor-General's visit with customary pomp. During his two-day visit, Mountbatten called me and talked to me at length about the future relations of Britain and India and the future of the princes. Campbell-Johnson has recorded the substance of these talks in his book, *Mission with Mountbatten*. It was while we were conversing that an express telegram was delivered to him with the news that Mahatmaji had started a fast to improve Hindu-Muslim relations. Mountbatten jumped up and gave the telegram to me without speaking. I commented: 'Very good. This is the only way to reform the Hindus.' Mountbatten queried: 'What if he dies?' I pacified him with the reminder that Gandhiji had survived other fasts. After pondering for a while, he asked: 'I shall be returning to Delhi tomorrow. Will it be misunderstood if I call on him?' 'The Muslims would have resented it previously. But now everyone will be happy if you call', I replied. That was the end of our exchange. On reaching Delhi, Lord and Lady Mountbatten visited Gandhiji.

A week later I received a telegram from my brother calling

me home because of my mother's illness. She had been in weak health for some time. Except for the infirmity of 73 years, there was no specific illness. In view of her condition, I was very anxious to spend at least a fortnight with her.

Mother no longer cared for life. Her preoccupations were with bathing, praying and worship. Her daily bath and prayers were elaborate as ever. While she no longer bothered about domestic problems, she continued to insist on watching my brother and myself eat our meals and ensuring that temple offerings were correctly made. She had only one desire left and that was to see my eldest niece married before she died. As soon as I arrived, she told me this. Mother was afraid that if the marriage was not arranged during my visit, it might not take place in her lifetime. I complied with her wishes and we immediately arranged a quiet marriage which mother was able to see. She died three months later.

With the death of my mother, our joint family came to the end of its course. Mother herself used to advise partition and in fact mentioned it to me a day before my departure. While she was witness to the whole social transition and could foresee its ultimate consequences, she was spared the sight of a break-up in our own family. She was born when the matriarchal system was at its zenith, when the head of the family had powers almost of life and death. I know that mother did not regard them as 'golden days'. She took up the management of the family in her youth. For thirty years she ran an establishment where many branches and generations lived together. Thus she knew at first hand what a large joint family was. Her last twenty-five years were spent in the Chalayil house with her brothers and children after the preliminary partition of the family. Thus she was able to see the system break up stage by stage.

Mother's principal traits were her sense of duty, her understanding and kindness. As a girl, she used to read the *Puranas* and devotional books in Malayalam. Every year, in the month of Karkatagam,[5] she used to read the *Ramayana* from cover to cover. During the rest of the year, she used to read the

Bhagavata in the evenings. As long as her eyesight aided by spectacles permitted her to read by the light of the traditional oil lamp, she used to do the reading herself. In later life, the took some interest in other Malayalam books also. Novels, poems and other works were read out to her and she used to enjoy them .

Although prayers, fasts and other observances were routine to her all her life, it was only after her daughter became old enough to take over part of her domestic responsibilities that my mother turned her mind steadfastly to God. Her morning prayers lengthened till 11 a.m. when only she wou'd break her fast. The evenings were likewise engaged. Thus constantly immersed in thoughts of God, death presented no terrors to her.

It was during my visit to Kerala that I heard the shattering news of Gandhiji's murder. Even in remote Kavalam village, people's outpouring grief was evident. Like the rest of India, Travancore mourned. Rarely in human history has such an event evoked so universal a lament. As soon as my first shock was over, I was alarmed by the thought of possible repercussions in Delhi. I returned to Bikaner full of foreboding. Thanks to providence and the courage and integrity of her leaders, India was able to tide over this momentous crisis.

I said goodbye to Bikaner on 13 March, and recall gratefully the affection shown to me by the people. The next day I was appointed India's Ambassador to China.

22

Some Books

I have written earlier of my literary work during my term in Bikaner. At the same time, I was able to write several serious books in English. On my return from the Pacific Relations Conference, I had a three-week stay in London and the much-noticed *The Future of South-East Asia*[1] was written then.

My interest in South-East Asian history and its future grew naturally out of my study of Indian history. Cambodia, Siam, Java, Malaya and other countries were once subject to Indian cultural influence. Even today their civilization is based on Hindu culture. From the time I started reading about their history, I was anxious to see these lands as they were today. The primary object of the Pacific Relations Conference was to consider the future of these countries. In 1943 they were mostly under Japanese influence. I expected that the Japanese would be expelled soon and these lands would revert to European control. It seemed to me that this would be detrimental to Indian independence. I decided that we should work for a post-war settlement which would free these countries from colonialism. This conviction led to *The Future of South-East Asia*.

I reached London on 20 January 1943 and left on 12 February. Within this interval, I had undertaken to complete the book and deliver the typescript. Since wartime regulations prohibited the sending of manuscripts from India, I was forced to complete the manuscript in London itself and did this on schedule.

The notice the book received on publication was unexpected. There were separate editions for America and Britain and an Indian edition also, which indicates the success it achieved. But its success was not merely in circulation. It is now accepted that the thesis of the book served in some measure to influence

the thinking of people in power in England and America and many of its ideas gained currency. In a letter that the Prime Minister of Siam, Rajvams Pramoj wrote to me at the end of the War, he affirmed that the arguments in my book were of assistance in drafting an honourable peace treaty for his State. My views were frequently commended and criticized by newspapers and magazines in England and people like Sir George Schuster used to refer to them in public assemblies including the Parliament.

I tried to prove in the book that India would not achieve the status of a great power unless Pakistan was conceded, and this was unpalatable to many protagonists of an undivided Hindustan. For this very reason, however, C. Rajagopalachari, then estranged from the Congress, sent me a long letter approving my views. Many other prominent people agreed that the Pakistan claim would have to be conceded.

My thesis was: The future of South-East Asia could not be divorced from India and the security of countries like Burma, Siam and Malaya had to be linked with India if their independence was to be guaranteed against interference by other powers, that if the Europeans tried to maintain their imperialist hold on these countries after the War it would lead to serious unrest, that consequently these countries had to be liberated and their economic and defence policies should be co-ordinated with India's. The history of post-war events more or less confirms my thesis and I consider this somewhat gratifying.

The book, *India and the Indian Ocean*,[2] was written to establish my case in a debate with Guy Wint. It was meant to document our naval tradition reaching back to Vedic times. Western historians used to tell us that naval power originated in the West and we never had any prowess at sea. We came to accept this story. I had no difficulty in showing that this was incorrect and that unless there had been a strong seafaring tradition in India, Hindu culture could not have reached places as distant as the Indonesian archipelago. I first realized the strength of this tradition when I was reading

Somadeva's *Kathasaritsagara*. It has many stories surpassing the exploits of Sinbad the Sailor. This fact was clear to me even when I was collecting material for my book, *Malabar and the Portuguese*. I therefore had no trouble in establishing my thesis that the leadership of the Indian ocean devolved from ancient times on India.

My attempt was to compress the history of the period from the Vedas to 1756 when British naval might destroyed the ships of Angrey.[3] Although the book was soon written, its publication presented many difficulties. Under the Defence of India Rules, all manuscripts were subject to military censorship. Even if the book reached England, printing paper was so scarce that high-level intercession would be required. It was at this juncture that my opponent in debate, Guy Wint, himself undertook to solve all these problems. He sent the manuscript to England by diplomatic pouch and paper for it was apparently released under instructions from the India Secretary, Amery himself. In England, the book stirred up a storm of argument. In India all the major newspapers devoted leading articles to it. In one year, the book ran through three editions in England. It is now a textbook for naval students.

Of all my English writings, I give pride of place to my *Survey of Indian History*. My early interest in Indian history is attested to by my book on Harsha and the two books on Malabar and the Europeans. At all times and in the midst of all pre-occupations, I kept up my interest in writing. The more I read Indian history, the more miserable I felt. Anyone could see that the so-called basic documents on which it was based were mostly written by Europeans who had neither knowledge of nor respect for Hindu culture and whose purpose was to whitewash European imperialism of the past century. The position of satellite Indian historians was worse. That this feeling grew in India is evidenced by the various organized attempts to rewrite Indian history.

I had another corrective also to suggest. Because Indian history was mostly written from the vantage point of Delhi, South

Indian culture was apt to be neglected. Moreover, with the advent of the Europeans who called themselves Aryans we in India too had developed a kind of Aryan snobbery. My view was that Dravidian culture was of equal importance and that Hindu culture was the product of their admixture and that neither the Muslim invasion nor European imperialism had altered this position. I had long wanted to write a book establishing this view.

But once again, it was an accident that triggered off its writing. Kusum Nair had recently promoted a publishing house called National Information & Publications, with the blessing of Mrs Naidu and Mrs Pandit. She wanted it to be affiliated to the Congress and to serve the cause of popular education. In July 1946, Kusum brought several people together in Bombay to launch the project. They included Mrs Naidu, Mrs Pandit, Jaya Prakash Narayan, Humayun Kabir and Syed Hussain. Mrs Naidu presided. I suggested that if a publishing house was set up, it should start with books on Indian culture, written at a popular level. The meeting approved the idea. Kabir was asked to write a book on *Our Tradition* and myself, *A Survey of Indian History*, and we agreed. The books were to be submitted to the Committee by the end of December.

After my return from Bombay, I did not take the commitment seriously and when a few days later, I read that Kusum Nair had gone to Ceylon, I wondered if the scheme had been given up. But I reckoned without the determination of that young woman. As soon as she returned from Ceylon to Delhi, she sent me a telegram that she was coming to Bikaner. It was when she came to my house in Bikaner early in September, that I knew I could not evade the task. She left Bikaner with the injunctions: 'Not more than three hundred pages. No display of learning. I want the manuscript before January.'

I also realized the extent and gravity of the assignment only then. To compress five thousand years of Indian history into three hundred pages; in a style not intended to win the approval

of scholars but to interest the common man; to complete it in less than four months. I decided to buckle down to it. I made it a rule to write every morning for an hour and a half before leaving for my office. The daily stint was completed even when I was on tour or in a train. Two main chapters for instance were written while attending a conference in Udaipur. The final chapter and epilogue were written and the book thus completed while staying at Kapurthala Palace for the Maharajah's birthday festivities.

The scene is still vividly pictured in my mind. The palace at Kapurthala was modelled on Louis XIV's Versailles and set in the middle of a beautiful park. Guests attending the birthday celebrations were housed in one wing of the palace. I have not seen rooms decorated and maintained in such lavish style in any other Indian palace. My bedroom was adjoined by an office room where I could read and write. We reached Kapurthala at about 10.30 in the morning. After paying my respects to the Maharajah, I went to my room. Meanwhile my secretary Bhaskara Menon had neatly arranged my manuscript with my notes and references on the table and this was the first thing to catch my eye.

That morning, I had many things to discuss with the Maharajah of Bikaner in the train and thus had missed my daily session. I therefore decided to devote the two hours before lunch to the job. I had scarcely bathed and changed before sitting down to write, when an A.D.C. to the Maharajah called to invite us to watch the special show arranged for us in the garden below. We could not stay away. When we went down, we found a conjurer up to his tricks. The Maharajah's guests were all there. I also sat down in the front row. After thus making my presence known, I managed to slip away. I returned to my room, bolted the door and sat down till lunch-time, managing to finish one chapter of the book.

This left the final chapter and the epilogue. It was late in the night when the festivities ended and the guests dispersed. I woke up next morning with a headache. As a matter of duty, I man-

aged to write one chapter and spent the remaining time in the garden. While thus listlessly observing the flowers and creepers, my mind continued to wrestle with that final chapter. Thoughts and phrases from that unwritten chapter kept forming in my mind. It seemed that the book was really completed during that hour in the garden.

That evening there was a grand ball in the palace and it would have been discourteous for a guest to stay away. Besides, I was sitting next to a princess of the Kapurthala family. While we were talking and making merry, one half of my mind was still wrapped up in that last chapter. It was midnight when the drinking and dancing ended. When I returned to my room, I had no thought of sleep. I sat down without taking off my formal apparel. The sentences already formed in my mind tumbled out and on to the writing paper. I did not realize the passing of time. When the last sentence was done, I looked at the watch. It was half-past-three.

It must have been eight when I woke up the next morning. I got up with the idea of writing the epilogue also. When I was ready in the morning, I enquired what the other guests were doing. I was told that they were seeing Kapurthala town. Since the town was not new to me, I informed the Maharajah's secretary that I would like to rest in the morning.

It was a fine morning. Although it was winter, there was a bright sun shining on the garden. I was tempted to stroll in the garden but kept turning over the scheme of the epilogue in my mind. I soon returned to my table and got up only after that was also done.

It was a load off my shoulders. From the beginning of September, the job had been weighing on me like the old man from the sea in Sinbad. No other book had given me so much worry. It may have been the magnitude and import of the task, the sense of responsibility that a new Indian history attuned to the new politics of an independent India had to be produced, that made it seem an almost unbearable burden. The end of the book was therefore an immense relief to me.

My hope was that the book would be released on Independence Day as a reverential tribute to the new India. The typescript was sent to Kusum Nair by 1 January 1947 and she promised to arrange this. But when Mountbatten advanced the date, we found it hard to match his pace. However, the lady's enthusiasm and ability prevailed and *A Survey of Indian History* did come out on 15 August.

23

The End of an Era

A long chapter of my life that started on 1 January 1928 ended on 13 March 1948. The scenes and incidents of those two decades may now appear to another generation to belong to an altogether different world. The death throes of the British administration in India, the evening of princely rule, the bright dawn of Indian independence and the Mahatma who guided the many marionettes of this grand puppet-show—what a many-splendoured age it was!

When one takes account of the great changes in these twenty years, we can see one era succeed another. Yesterday's jail-birds are today's ministers. In the palace of Britain's imperial representative, a khaddar-clad near-hermit lives, scorning its pomp and circumstance. Over the Red Fort of the Mugals, where the Union Jack flew, the tri-colour of India's redemption flutters proudly. The abracadabra of European domination has disappeared, almost as if by magic, leaving not a rack behind.

Any account of the last days of princely rule will sound incredible today. When I entered Kashmir service, the glory of Indian princes was already in decline. They were already uncertain about their future, but these fears had not changed their way of life. Who can imagine today an oversize personality like Maharajah Bhupendra Singh with his enormous entourage of wives and progeny? His personal expenditure consumed half the State revenue. His kennel engrossed him more than his State. Although the State was short of hospitals, the surgery of his dog hospital was built of marble. He never used to leave his palace till five in the evening, and when he did sally forth, he would be decked in all his finery and followed by a huge retinue. The story of Alwar's Jayasingh was more picturesque.

His crown sported the figure *Om*[1] in diamonds, while his tunic was emblazoned with another emblem *Rajarishi*,[2] also in diamonds! He never saw anybody except with his crown on. He would never touch leather and when he entered a train or a ship, the leather coverings had to be changed. The Nawab of Junagadh, much like the Maharajah of Patiala, loved his dogs more than his subjects. The collar of the dog which sat with him on his throne was studded with diamonds. The wedding of this lucky animal was celebrated with a durbar and a feast attended by State officials. The *Mir*[3] of Kherpur was incredibly keen about music, spending his time with singers and dancers. The eccentrics are legion—the Maharajah of Kapurthala who lived like a French nobleman, the Maharajah of Kashmir who practised *haute cuisine* after one o'clock at night assisted by his courtiers, Gaekwad obsessed with horses and racing, Rajahappa who spent most of his time in Europe. All of them boasted that they were pillars of the British Empire. And yet their people looked on many of them as mere pawns of British Residents.

They used to gather in Delhi and Bombay ostensibly to confer on matters of State, but what occurred was merely a parade of cars and fashions. Where have they gone? Where today are the Viceroys whom they feted? It is no exaggeration to describe these pictures as old nightmares. Many crowns have been pawned, many processional elephants sold. The Maharajah of Baroda has bought a house in England, the Holkar in America, others in France. Smaller princes hunt for jobs in Delhi. What a transformation!

These actors, once as elaborately made up as Kathakali dancers, have disappeared behind the curtain. The question may arise how all these grand and grandiose title-holders were swept under the carpet of history in the twinkling of an eye. Many are amazed that Vallabhbhai Patel was able to sweep them away in so short a time. The *Puranas* say that Parasurama[4] fought twenty-one battles before he could exterminate the Kshatriya princes, but the new Parasurama needed no battle to make a clean sweep of kingship in India. One by one, they

queued up to sign their Instruments of Accession, collected their pensions and left with good grace. Their ministers sank without a trace, their armies surrendered without firing a shot. It is worth looking for the cause of this mighty transformation.

The truth is that princely power was a mere reflection of British power. In a signed article in the January 1919 issue of *The Modern Review*, I described the purposeless life of the princes and queried their *raison d'etre* in a free India. Twenty years of acquaintance with them merely confirmed this judgement. While British power survived in India, I thought the Indian States deserved protection as islands of partial self-government. But I was never in any doubt that once independence came to India, their days would be numbered.

The chief cause of this is the fact that the people lost all respect for their rulers. As the freedom movement gathered strength, the Indian people as a whole came to dislike the princes as henchmen of the British and as the enemies of popular government. The treatment of Gandhiji in Rajkot, the persecution of Congress leaders in Travancore, Jawaharlal's arrest in Kashmir, all helped to increase that dislike. Simultaneously the old fear and respect for princes simply died.

It was when princely power was thus badly shaken that India became independent. Even then, the Congress leaders did not intend to wipe out the princes at one stroke. The causes of the final holocaust were C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, the Nawab of Bhopal and the Nizam of Hyderabad. C. P.'s crusade for independence was a sham but it was a lesson to Patel, proving that in a moment of peril, some princes would not hesitate to stab the nation in the back. It was also the case for the total elimination of princely rule. Every speech that C. P. made in support of princely independence and every letter he wrote to Attlee and others seeking assistance merely served to seal the fate of the princely order.

The evil designs of Bhopal made it clear that these threats were not mere sabre-rattling. His plot to entice the Maharajah of Jodhpur to Pakistan's side has been mentioned. The action of the Nizam served to underline the risks. Anyone can now

see how these three were responsible for the final elimination of princely rule in India.

There may be some who lament the vanished princely order. Emotional links with Sri Rama or Sri Krishna or the Chera kings may sway some minds. But let the sentimentalists reflect on the role of those who tried to obstruct India's march to independence even when it was round the corner and judge how much sympathy they deserve.

It is relevant to look back on another tribe who also vanished behind history's curtain along with the princes. The distribution of titles was a major part of British political strategy. The tribe of courtiers was decked in various insignia ranging from the humble Rao Saheb to the portentous G. C. S. I. The Indian princes who prided themselves on their birth, did not however disdain enhancing their exalted status with British titles and a knighthood or so. Some of their titles sound ludicrous today. The Maharajah of Baroda was a beloved son of the British empire, while the Maharajah of Kashmir was its eminent shield! So too the Mahendra status enjoyed by the Maharajah of Patiala. The Raja of Cochin became a Maharajah, the Nizam an Exalted Highness, and sundry princes magnified by salutes of gunfire—all part of the fabric of British diplomacy.

Leaving aside the princes, the conservative leaders and officials and all the other hangers-on revelled in the titles which were the reward for their loyalty to the British. Of my government secretaries in Bikaner, three were Rao Bahadurs and many below them Rao Sahebs, which shows how far this demoralizing system had undermined public life. The twenty-eight years from 1921 were in fact a field day for the knights of the British empire. Today nobody flaunts these titles. Thus the snobbery growing out of governmental patronage has also vanished, from the stage of Indian history.

These changes are not confined to politics alone. Social changes are equally noticeable. Like the disappearance of matriarchy in Kerala, the whole country has seen radical changes. The scorned and the neglected have gained importance, the mighty and rich have fallen in the world. The transforma-

tion was most evident in Rajputana which I knew so well. The men who gave the area its name, the Rajputs, had a monopoly of land, position and power. Others, however rich, were subordinate to them. In one year, this situation had changed. In the Rajasthan ministry there is only one Rajput today! Their principalities and privileges ended with the coming of representative government.

The change is also reflected in the arts and in literature. When in 1928, Menaka[5] gave a successful exhibition of Indian dance in England, we in India were startled. Indians had underrated the art of the dance. People used to scoff and not applaud the efforts of Vallathol to revive Kathakali and Mohini Attam.[6] Today, the dances of India have regained public esteem. Uday Shankar, Ram Gopal, Mrinalini Sarabhai and others are honoured by governments and nobody is surprised when M. S. Subbulakshmi is received as a guest in the Vice-regal Lodge.

The literary transformation is more momentous. Poets, short story writers and novelists are blazing new trails. The so-called progressive writing and realism are perhaps transient waves, but as far as Malayalam is concerned, the new lines of development are utterly different from the old. The position in other languages seems to be similar.

It will thus be seen that in this short span of time, the shape of things in our lives has altered. It seems to me that we have come to the end of an era in India. Perhaps, this book is also a mirror of the times.

24

China

My life after my appointment as Indian Ambassador to China may be considered as the opening of a new chapter. It was lived mostly outside India, in very different circumstances and concerned chiefly with foreigners. While this divorce from Indian politics created a feeling of emptiness in a mind accustomed to them from youth, I was not unduly disturbed by the transition because I had developed contacts and an interest in world affairs during my stay in Europe and even afterwards.

My books on *The Future of South-East Asia* and *India and the Indian Ocean* indicate my awareness of India's international responsibilities. Nehru had spoken appreciatively about these books to several people. However, I still do not know exactly what prompted him to choose me as the second non-career diplomat of our country, immediately after Shrimati Vijayalakshmi's posting to Moscow. I had heard that he had prepared a list of people whom he considered suitable for diplomatic assignments. Since it was from Sarojini Naidu, that I learned that my name had been included, it is quite possible that she may have suggested it.

I left Bikaner on 13 April 1948, Vaisakhi Day, my appointment as Ambassador being announced the same day. After spending three weeks in Delhi to find out my duties in this new post and our government's policy objectives, I left with my family for China. The Governor of Bengal at that time was C. Rajagopalachari and at his invitation, we halted in Calcutta for two days.

The Raj Bhavan at Calcutta had been occupied for over a century by Viceroys. Built by the Marquis of Wellesley on the model of British palaces, this building used to be a kind of symbol of British imperial might in India. In this vast mansion,

Rajagopalachari lived alone except for his widowed daughter. This ageing *khaddar*-clad Brahmin and his widowed daughter were surrounded by hundreds of guards and flunkeys, showing the transformation that had come over the Indian scene.

The food at Raj Bhavan had also changed and the *sambar*, curd and pickles typical of South Indian cuisine dominated the table of Viceroys. The servants in turban and uniform waited upon us with military precision. The old form and ceremonial seemed to continue, but the food alone was distinctly Tamil. I was intrigued by the thought that the Raj Bhavan at Calcutta (like that at Bombay) would have to entertain many distinguished foreign dignitaries to whom the austerity and piquancy of Rajagopalachari's diet might seem a little incongruous. However, it was evident that he lacked neither the authority nor the dignity of his position.

We emplaned at night for Shanghai. It is hard to describe my emotions when we boarded an American aircraft. On the one hand, there was the natural elation at representing one's motherland, newly liberated after centuries of foreign domination. On the other, I was not without apprehension about the difficulties ahead, especially the impact on India of the revolution sweeping China. In the balance, I was well pleased with an appointment of such historic importance, linking as it did, the world's two most populous countries and oldest civilizations. While the embassies at London, Moscow, Washington and Paris were in many ways more important because of the might of the powers to whom they were attached, the embassy at Nanking[1] was not inferior if one took into account the ancient ties between China and India and their much older civilizations. On the contrary, when one considered the momentous potentialities of the future, our relations with China assumed greater significance.

We reached Shanghai by eleven next morning, and were received by the Chinese government representatives as well as a number of Indian residents led by the Consul-General. After formal greetings, we repaired to Cathay Hotel. What struck me about the hotel was that it was occupied entirely by

foreigners—although it stood in China, it was a purely European institution.

The position of Shanghai was about the same. Until about two years before my arrival there, Shanghai too did not have any strong ties with the government of China. Although it was China's premier port and biggest trading centre, its development had started barely a hundred years earlier and all that time and up to the end of World War II, it was controlled by Europeans. In fact, the administration of Shanghai was in the hands of European powers. Japan seized it from them and when Japan was defeated, authority was transferred to China. In 1948, Shanghai was formally ruled by the Chinese government but it still prided itself on being a kind of European city. The bulk of its trade and main shops were all in the hands of Europeans. Nearly one hundred thousand Europeans lived permanently in Shanghai. One had only to see the famous bund to be convinced that Shanghai was a European city; and yet, a little to the interior, you reached the real China.

I have never seen a city so crowded as Shanghai. Even those who have seen London and New York will be amazed by the spectacle. The flow of traffic on its main streets was as interminable and unbroken as a river. At dusk, the streets were lit by the glow of innumerable multi-coloured neon signs. Except for New York's Broadway, no other city could boast of so many coloured lights. Shop fronts blazed with coloured signs proclaiming the virtues of their merchandise.

At that time, even London and other large Western cities were experiencing shortages, but the shops of Shanghai seemed to have a plethora of everything and to lack nothing. I was surprised by this uncommon abundance. While I knew that China produced a lot of silk, I could not believe that one could buy unlimited quantities of food or clothing, having been used to the ration cards of England and the import controls of India. People with money lacked nothing in Shanghai. But there was the rub—money.

Inflation can never have reached such giddy heights as in China. That I could spend fifty million Chinese dollars in the

space of two hours sounds incredible but it is true. This enormous sum was worth a bare four hundred and fifty rupees! A newspaper cost 35,000 dollars. It was a sight to remember when the Chinese went shopping with bags and bags of currency notes. Since market prices were pegged to the American dollar, their Chinese equivalent changed daily, sometimes hourly, as I learnt when a merchant sent me some silk georgette on approval. The morning quotation was 600,000 dollars per yard. When the specimen arrived at my hotel, it was marked 680,000 dollars. On enquiry, I was told that the American dollar had appreciated in the meantime. The price was only one U. S. dollar per yard and the Chinese dollar-rate varied with the exchange.

While those who derived their income in foreign money were immune, the effect of such fluctuations on the Chinese was disastrous. If your morning's money loses its value by nightfall, orderly life becomes impossible. Town people could convert their Chinese dollars into American dollars even if this had to be done in the black market, but those in the country had no such refuge. They were reduced to barter.

Although Shanghai was a big city with an enormous volume of trade, it never struck me as a Chinese city at all. Nor was this surprising, when you think of its history and growth. The city's pre-eminence was due to its European connection. Its architecture and style of living were hardly different from those of other great ports like Marseilles, New York or London and its location in China as well as its occupation by the Chinese were merely accidental.

Before the war, when Shanghai was administered by Europeans, its police force was mainly composed of Sikhs. After European authority ended, most of them stayed on, taking to other occupations. In addition, there were another twenty Indian families in Shanghai as well as a Consul-General, Krishnamurti who belonged to Palghat. He was concerned with the safety and comfort of Indian nationals and the promotion of India's trade. Although at that time, there was practically no commerce between the two countries, our government

appointed a Consul-General with the intention of eventually developing trade.

We left Shanghai on 15 May, at eleven in the night. The train to Nanking was well appointed, but because of communist insurgency, the number of trains had been reduced. The train from China's biggest port to its capital had to run under military escort. When day broke, I drew the window curtain and looked at the landscape outside. The picture was entrancing. The railway line ran through paddy fields where farmers were already tending their seedlings, barely ten days old. From houses nearby, large numbers of men and women were wending their way to the fields. The Chinese peasant, like his Indian counterpart, is devoted to the soil which he and his forefathers have tilled for thousands of years. The most striking contrast with India was the absence of a single cow or bullock in the fields. There were occasional buffaloes to be seen, but they were not used for agriculture. In the same way, I was struck by the paucity of trees in the landscape. Perhaps there were trees and forests near the hills, but in this region approaching Nanking, the Chinese apparently felt there was no place for trees.

The train arrived at Nanking exactly at seven. I was received not only by a representative of the Foreign Ministry and officials of the Indian Embassy but also by the Ambassadors of Britain, Canada and Australia as well as Dr. Lou Chia Loon, the Chinese Ambassador to India.

The residence of the Indian Ambassador was located in Peipin Lu Street and above the building, the tricolour with the wheel of Asoka was fluttering. I confess that my heart quickened at the sight. It was the symbol of free India in a foreign capital, and it was my responsibility to guard the dignity and honour of that flag.

25

Chiang Kai-shek

When I arrived in Nanking, the first parliament in Chinese history was in session. According to the Chinese Constitution, the National Assembly's function was confined to the election of the President and Vice-President. Once the head of state was elected, the government intended to constitute an organization comprising five sub-divisions to administer the country: a Law Chamber, an Administrative Chamber, a Chamber of Discipline, a Chamber of Examinations and a Judicial Chamber. Since this pentangular form of government was unique, I believe it deserves some attention.

The Law Chamber had the task of enacting laws but none of the other functions of parliament such as controlling the government and checking the administration. The Administrative Chamber was independent and equal to the Law Chamber, although the Constitution provided that the Chairman of the former should be appointed by the President who should notify the Law Chamber who in turn should approve the appointment. The head of the administration so appointed was to become Prime Minister and select his ministerial colleagues and inform the President and the Law Chamber. The Chamber of Discipline was entrusted with the duties of scrutiny, supervision and punishment of the other wings of government and in fact had powers even to impeach and try the President himself. It had the power of enquiring into any matter either directly or through Commissions appointed by it. The Chamber of Examinations occupied the position that the Public Service Commission has in India, while the Judicial Chamber had the duty of appointing judges and supervising the courts.

It was my good fortune to visit China at this moment when it was moving from military rule to a form of democracy embo-

died in this five-cornered Constitution. Since the death of Sun Yat-sen, all powers of government had been gathered into the hands of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, who ran the country in dictatorial fashion very much like Hitler and Mussolini. Having proclaimed China to be a member of the alliance which fought the Nazis for preserving democracy, Chiang had no alternative but to end his military rule and introduce at least the trappings of democracy. This explained the new Constitution. The first event was the presidential election. Chiang first of all declared that he wished to retire from politics and was not interested in the presidency but at the last minute agreed to stand for election under pressure from popular representatives. The election took place two days after my arrival in Nanking, and I need not say that the Generalissimo won by a huge majority.

In 1948, China occupied a special position in the world. At the end of the Japanese war, China had been accepted as one of the 'Big Five' in world affairs. It is difficult today to conceive the high repute enjoyed by China and Chiang at that time; repute won by four years of unaided struggle against the Japanese and another four years fighting in alliance with Britain and America. It was obvious that the leadership of Asia, ceded by Japan, would automatically fall on China, whatever the European powers might wish. The Japanese for their part had been beaten in the war, lost their military apparatus and wealth and were under military occupation by the victors. Who could imagine then that in another ten years, the Japanese would achieve greater power than before! India was a dependent nation and even if it gained independence, nobody expected India to match the Chinese in power. No other Asian country could come anywhere near China either in numbers or resources.

Internally also, China appeared to be entering an era of greatness. The Europeans wound up their settlements and returned them to China, who after one hundred years, became master of its own territory. This success over the European powers was considered to be more significant than the military

victory over Japan. With the return of lost territories like Manchuria and Formosa, republican China actually loomed larger than imperial China. Moreover, this powerful State had a million soldiers trained by America as well as nearly four million other troops besides a sizeable air force and navy. Altogether, China was a power whom no one could ignore.

America had promised to do everything to repair war damage and modernize the country. With this assurance, who could have any doubts about the future of China? True, in a distant mountain state, some communists were holding on to a bit of land under Mao Tse-tung. But they had only two hundred thousand men under arms and lacked modern weapons and war-planes, so that they did not seem to constitute any serious threat. Chiang gave them no more importance than that of a set of bandits. While they did indulge in guerrilla attacks, even in their home state of Yenan, they were forced to remain in hiding, so that Chiang boasted that he had nothing to fear from them. But there was another worry that kept nagging Chiang. The extreme havoc caused by monetary inflation had made life impossible for ordinary people. Within two months of the end of war, one American dollar became equal to a hundred thousand Chinese dollars. This savage inflation and resulting unreal prices were sure to lead to a total economic collapse unless promptly halted. With the unqualified help that America had promised, most people expected this problem could be solved and the Kuomintang party itself believed that Chiang would tide over this difficulty.

Certainly Chiang Kai-shek was a man out of the ordinary. That a man with so little education or accomplishments could remain the unchallenged leader of China for twenty-three years is itself proof of his extraordinary qualities. By Chinese standards tall, lean and muscular in build, clean-shaven, bald and with penetrating eyes, his physical appearance was hardly impressive nor would he stand out in a crowd. How such a man kept China under his absolute control for a quarter of a century needs some explanation.

He certainly had qualities of leadership, like love of his

country, determination, courage in adversity and dynamism. In a country where graft was second nature and where most officials openly accepted bribes, even his enemies did not accuse Chiang of corruption. While many around him and even his near relations were notoriously corrupt, no direct scandal ever attached to Chiang personally. Similarly, even when those around him vacillated or changed sides, he stood resolutely by his convictions. There is no question therefore that the people and the army had confidence in him.

In the end, two weaknesses undermined his position. The first was his family and favourites, who were hopelessly venal. Foremost among them were Madame Chiang's brother and brother-in-law, T. V. Soong and H. H. Kung. Chinese history of the past quarter of a century is so closely bound up with this 'Soong dynasty' that I should not omit some details here. During Sun Yat-sen's wilderness days, a minor tradesman called Charlie Soong helped him financially and in other ways. Soong had two sons and three daughters. I sometimes wonder if Charlie Soong ever dreamt of the varied fortunes and prospects of these five children! Take the daughters first. The eldest Eileen Soong married H. H. Kung who claimed to be the seventy-sixth descendant in the line of Confucius. In spite of his noble lineage, he had no compunction in cheating the treasury and in making money in questionable ways. He achieved renown as the Finance Minister of China, a position well calculated to feather his nest! He became one of the world's richest men and when he found China slipping into civil war, he departed with his wealth to America.

The second girl married Sun Yat-sen, the father of the nation. After the death of her husband, she was so depressed by the misdeeds of her relations that she withdrew from public life. Her character and qualities are justly famed. She returned to public life only after the Communists drove her relations out of Chinese politics. During Chiang's regime, she was engagged in charitable work. She occupied a position of eminence in the world of women comparable to that of Sarojini Devi in India or Eleanor Roosevelt in America.

The third sister was none other than the celebrated Madame Chiang Ka-shek. Educated, beautiful and *soigné*, Madame Chiang dominated any company. Brought up in America from childhood, her wit and charm were irresistible. Her ability is amply evidenced by the success she achieved as Minister for Aviation in the wartime government of China. When China's military fortunes were at their lowest ebb, Madame Chiang was deputed to seek assistance from America. Her lectures all over the country swung public opinion in favour of China. Many in India still remember her visit to India with the Generalissimo when she broadcast a talk on Indian freedom from All India Radio.

In spite of her outstanding gifts and ability, Madame Chiang was handicapped by certain defects which alienated her from her own people. One was avarice. It was widely believed that she was corrupt and that she had amassed a considerable fortune at some time by illegal means. Another defect was her association with relations, especially her brothers and brother-in-law, who betrayed the country's trust for their own personal enrichment. At one time, many of her relations occupied official posts and this led to her being blamed for many of the administration's misdeeds.

But her greatest defect was her overweening vanity. With her American upbringing and her fondness for American ways, Madame Chiang almost regarded her countrymen with contempt and they in turn thought of her as an American woman. She had little genuine compassion for the poor and her arrogance, based as it was on pride of learning, looks and wealth, was ill-founded. Chinese history recounts the tale of a queen named Yang Khai Fai whose avarice and conceit led to the destruction of her husband. The Chinese came to look on Madame Chiang as another Yang Khai Fai.

Her two brothers were T. V. Soong and T. L. Soong. 'T. V.' was one of China's leading bankers and later functioned as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, ending as the dictator of the southern provinces. For sheer ability and competence, T. V. was among the world's greatest statesmen, but he was

obsessed by love of money. Rumour has it that the money he squeezed out of the country by various means and salted away in America exceeded two hundred crores of rupees in value! His brother T. L. Soong, although he did not hold any notable office, was the main tool in these operations.

These relations were the prime cause of Generalissimo Chiang's downfall. Another reason was no doubt the lack of sufficient intelligence and education to appreciate the revolution in public opinion that was sweeping the country. He could not see that the common people themselves had changed and were no longer submissive to authority, so that mere power of arms was ineffective in dealing with them. He used to say publicly that he could suppress the communists in three months.

It must also be conceded that Chiang was not by nature compassionate and in fact did not hesitate to kill or plot the murder of his opponents. Thousands of men of radical views have thus been murdered at his orders. He deluded himself in thinking that he could run the country with the big stick. At the same time, Chiang was not conceited and was a man of Spartan habits and certainly patriotic according to his lights.

I was also invited to the ceremony on 20 May when he was installed as President. It was also the last public function in which Chiang participated. On that memorable day, he was surrounded by soldiers and statesmen and was felicitated by ambassadors and envoys from all the world's powers. Who would have guessed that within eight months of that presidential durbar this internationally celebrated figure would be stripped of office and power and forced to flee his capital in secret? No prophet would have hazarded the guess and yet that is exactly what happened.

The Communists did not challenge the might of Chiang seriously in May, though they did occupy some scattered areas. Even Chiang's enemies never imagined that their strength would gather like a typhoon in the China seas and spread over the whole country, while Chiang's five million strong army would vanish like the morning mist. It was simply inconcei-

vable. I myself expected to continue at my post undisturbed for at least two years.

Soon after Chiang's installation as President, Madame Chiang invited me and my family to tea. The President was also there. It was my first meeting with Madame Chiang. She told me all about her visit to India and her meeting with Mahatmaji and other personalities. She must have been about forty-five at the time but her beauty remained undiminished. I was able to observe her conversational skill in discussing clothes with ladies, politics with men and in fact all things with all people.

My official life in Nanking had begun.

26

The Diplomatic Corps

Since most of the world's great powers had deputed Ambassadors or Ministers to China, there was a notable diplomatic contingent at Nanking. Small countries like Afghanistan, the Vatican, Philippines, Switzerland and Austria had sent Ministers, but the rest had sent Ambassadors. Every ambassador had his quota of advisers, secretaries, military and other attachès, so that there were nearly two thousand foreign residents in Nanking with some kind of official status. Since this included women and children in varying numbers, members of the diplomatic community tended to live in a world of their own, remote from the local Chinese inhabitants.

A widely-known ambassador was asked to describe his duties. He replied that ninety-five per cent of it was merely mutual entertainment. When asked about the other five per cent, his reply was: 'Ah, that is Top Secret and I can't say anything about it!' Although he was joking, what he said was not far from the truth. It is a fact that much of the ambassador's time is taken up in entertaining officials and prominent people of the host country, in being entertained by them and by mutual entertainment among diplomats themselves. That this state of things is accepted as both proper and necessary is proved by the money officially set apart for such expenses. Granting that hospitality and 'guespitality' are indispensable elements in a diplomat's life, I need hardly say that his duties are something else again.

In general it may be said that an ambassador's job is to maintain friendly relations between his own country and the host country. One part of his duties covers the routine of elucidating his government's policies, clearing up any misconceptions or doubts, eliminating any causes of friction, expanding

trade, promoting his country's interests and assisting his compatriots. Beyond the routine, there is a penumbra of diplomatic function, viz., study and reporting to his principals of the policies and inner motives of the host country, its military and financial condition, the state of public opinion and the position of the government. He must also be aware of the aims and activities of third powers and be alert to their possible repercussions on his own national interest. All of these functions are detailed in Kautilya's *Artha-sastra.*

Speaking of China at that time, the primary function of the Indian Ambassador was to cement the friendship between India and China. To evince sympathy and understanding for China, to nourish in turn their own sympathy and understanding for India for which purpose news and publicity handouts had to be regularly distributed, public speeches made and newspaper editors cultivated—all these were indispensable duties. Since minor incidents could create misunderstandings that might develop into major irritants, it was the ambassador's function to resolve these promptly and to see that inter-state transactions of all kinds were settled legally and equitably. Many Indians were residing in China at the time for professional and commercial purposes and it was also the ambassador's duty to see that Chinese officials did not harass them in any way and to give them any help needed. He was always concerned to minimize obstacles to trade between the two countries and see that trade increased. While the responsibility for all these rested on the ambassador, most of the actual work was delegated to his subordinate officials.

The ambassador however dealt directly with matters of government policy. Persisting with the China example, the ambassador had to report constantly to his own government on every aspect of the Chinese political situation. He had to know how strong the Kuomintang Party was in the country, how strong its opponents were, how much public support the government enjoyed, the causes of the government's financial collapse, the real strength of its army and its weaknesses, the policy of the government towards India and in respect of the

frontier with India—and to keep his government informed. Nor was this all. He had to find out what powers like the U.S.A., Russia, Britain and France were doing in China, what their policy objectives were and how their dealings with China in pursuance of their individual objectives would affect India. This was also an exacting task.

America, Russia and other great powers had, in addition to their ambassadors, consulates in the main cities of China and also intelligence networks. They were thus in a position to know everything that happened in any corner of that vast country. Their missionaries and businessmen also served in a sense as unofficial intelligence men. India had only a single consulate at Shanghai. We had no missionaries or tradesmen in the interior. Lacking such supplementary sources of information, I had to depend on contacts with other ambassadors and with government officials for news. This explains the role of entertainment as a channel of communication.

China's Foreign Minister in 1948 was Dr Wang Shih Chieh. I had known him slightly before I was posted to China but we became friendly right from the beginning and my relations with the Kuomintang government were accordingly cordial. Another contributing factor was my long-standing friendship with Dr George Yeh, the permanent deputy minister in the department. Yeh was a scholar educated at Cambridge, who had visited India often and knew our leaders. President Chiang had absolute confidence in him and this was why he had been appointed permanent Deputy Minister.

The leading members of the diplomatic corps were three: the American Ambassador, Dr Layton Stewart, the British Ambassador, Sir Ralph Stevenson, the Russian Ambassador, General Roshchin. Dr Stewart had been born and brought up in China and had been head of Peking University for many years. He knew the Chinese language as well as English and used to say publicly that he loved China as much as he loved America. Professions apart, no one had any doubt that this seventy-three-year-old man, whose whole life had been spent in China, was a disinterested friend of China and the Chinese

people. President Chiang considered him a close friend and invariably consulted him before taking any step. Yet I had the impression all the time that Dr Stewart did not understand the Chinese situation fully and lacked the power to influence the government in the right direction. He commanded public respect more as a moral figure than as a skilled diplomat.

The British Ambassador was a different kind of person altogether. Stevenson was the prototype of all ambassadors. His aristocratic looks, consciousness of his position as the representative of a great power, his elegance of garb and conversational finesse marked him out as the imperial envoy par excellence. A seasoned diplomat with the experience of many capitals behind him, Stevenson had little difficulty in grasping the trend of events in China or in safeguarding British interests at every turn. He received daily reports from cities like Canton, Peking and Shanghai and because of Britain's traditional contacts, he also used to get information from many prominent Chinese nationals. The sources of British intelligence were thus diverse.

The Russian envoy, General Roshchin, was a former Red Army officer who had worked as Military Attachè in Chungking for several years. He knew the language exceptionally well and besides, knew most of the important figures in Chinese life. He was one of the youngest diplomats there and was perhaps not yet forty-five. At a time when the government of China was engaged in a mortal struggle with the communists, General Roshchin's life in Nanking could not have been very comfortable, but he gave no outward sign of this. While he appeared at all public functions and exchanged pleasantries with everyone, he generally avoided contact with other ambassadors. I do not think he ever accepted any dinner invitations except from the Indian and Egyptian embassies. While we were friendly and used to meet frequently for discussions, I must say that he was a kind of a recluse among the diplomats.

Some of the other European diplomats were men of distinction and repute, but I need not refer to them here. Among the Commonwealth ambassadors, Canada's T. C. Davis and

Australia's Keith Officer were notable. While Davis was not specially keen on politics, he was always attentive to the personal needs of others and an admirable trouble-shooter. So much so, that we considered him the doyen of the diplomatic community. He made his name as a judge in Canada and later as High Commissioner to Australia. While he was an able and engaging personality, he was not very interested or well versed in political wheeling and dealing. Nor did he pretend to be. However Keith Officer was his opposite. He was an old hand at politics, having worked in London, Moscow and Washington and at our usual Monday conferences of Commonwealth ambassadors, Keith Officer's views and ideas received special attention.

There were only seven envoys from Eastern countries. Apart from India, there was the Burmese Ambassador, Mian Thin, the Siamese Ambassador, Abhipal Raj Maitri, the Egyptian Ambassador, Elias Ismail Bey, the Afghan Minister, Tarsi, the Philippines Minister, Sebastian and the Persian Ambassador, Muhammad Faduq. Of these, Mian Thin and Ismail Bey were close friends of mine. Mian Thin was the brother of the wartime Foreign Minister of Burma, Tin Tut. While the Burmese government was living in exile in India, I got to know Tin Tut fairly closely. On his return to Burma, Tin Tut was working for his country's independence and fell to an assassin's bullet. Mian Thin and I looked on each other as brothers. He was well acquainted with Indian affairs and in fact had been expressly thanked by Pandit Nehru for the help he had rendered to Indian residents during the Japanese occupation of Burma. Although, like me, Mian Thin was new to the diplomatic field, he soon gained a position of note in the diplomatic community. Inferior to none in intelligence and tact, Mian Thin was an ideal representative of the new Asia.

Madame Mian Thin was a modest but outspoken and witty lady who read for the Bar in England and set up legal practice in Burma. Both of them knew Hindustani well and as a result we began to feel we belonged to one family.

The Egyptian envoy, Elias Ismail Bey, was a great friend of

India. Educated in France and well versed in the French, English and Spanish languages and with experience of work in many countries, Ismail Bey took to diplomacy like a duck to water. He delighted in throwing lavish parties at the slightest excuse and the parties at the Egyptian embassy were celebrated indeed. Although we Asian countries were less powerful, I was not prepared to yield primacy to the European envoys in dealing with China. Since events in China would affect India more than any other country, it was self-evident that India should have an independent policy. When I found that the Atlantic Pact powers were conferring frequently to co-ordinate their policies and safeguard their common interests, I told Mian Thin that the Asian envoys should also get together in the same way. He agreed, but since the Philippines was a U. S. satellite and Siam after its wartime defeat preferred to lie low, we quickly learned that complete unity among Asians was not possible. But we realized that if Burma and India stood together, Britain would not oppose us. When we started adopting a common front, the Commonwealth ambassadors began to consult us before committing themselves to any other group. Thus our India-Burma alliance resulted in almost altering the status of the two embassies.

Among the ladies in the diplomatic community, Lady Stevenson was the most notable. Madame Meriet, the handsome and active wife of the French Ambassador and the oriental but American-educated Madame Raj Maitri, were other leading lights. Also participating in our lives were Chinese ladies, wives of officials who had travelled abroad or lived in foreign countries.

Such was our little world in Nanking.

27

China: Past and Present

After their summer vacation, for which they had gone soon after the inauguration, the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang returned to Nanking at the end of August. Two days later, they invited me and my wife and children to an informal meal. The only other guests were an A. D. C. and Tai Chi Tao, a celebrated Buddhist scholar and Indophile. Chiang used to demonstrate his regard for India openly and by reaction often to clash with the British, but I had not understood how deep or genuine his feelings were. Many felt it was only a short-term tactic. During our conversation which lasted an hour and a half after dinner, I realized that Chiang had an abiding interest in India's freedom and secured progress. We discussed at length India's relation with Pakistan, our attitude to the British, the strength of the Communists, the Kashmir affair and similar subjects. It was his conviction that if China and India did not pursue an independent policy, both countries would be endangering their freedom. If Asian independence was to be saved not only from Communism but also from European domination and imperialism, India and China should work in harmony and if that work was to be fruitful our two countries should co-operate for our orderly development. These views of his were endorsed by Madame Chiang.

His views were unquestionably correct. But the problem, to my mind, was whether advantage or harm would accrue to India by allying itself with an administration that was on the verge of collapse because of internal dissensions. That India and China should work together was essential, but which China was the question, because that country was divided to such an extent. The power of the Communists was increasing day by day, while that of the Kuomintang was declining due

to internal bickerings. While the full extent of the Communist victory was at that time hidden in the womb of history, the condition of the Nationalist forces was already a matter for despair. While therefore echoing the Generalissimo's views, I suggested that the first step towards implementing his plans would be to establish internal order in both countries on firm foundations. His reply was: 'That is precisely what I think. I can wipe out these Communists in a matter of six months. By that time I expect your country would also have tided over its initial difficulties.' I was rather taken aback by this cool assumption of the President.

Thus ending our political discussions, we passed on to other topics, in the midst of which he asked me: 'Have you gone to Peking?' I replied: 'Not yet, but I plan to go soon.' 'Yes, you must go, I will arrange to send you in my own plane. That would be best.' I realized that this was a signal honour, I had never heard of the President's plane having been given to any ambassador for a private journey. We thus parted on very cordial terms.

I never imagined that this would be our last interview or that in three or four months' time the great Generalissimo and his talented wife would be expelled from their exalted positions by irresistible forces. Nor could I have done so, such was the speed of later developments.

We went to Peking at the Generalissimo's invitation on 24 September. As promised, he sent a special plane for our journey. Since this was a formal visit, the government also arranged for our formal reception and entertainment at Peking.

There is no doubt that cities like people have a character of their own. Some cities are vast and rich in amenities, yet leave no definite or intimate mark on our minds, however long we stay there, familiarity breeding no affection. We feel no urge to wander their streets or to breathe in their special atmosphere. Such are cities like Bombay or Shanghai which I know and which have never exercised any special attraction over me. Old Delhi, Madras, Ahmedabad and Banaras are the

opposite. They lack the grandeur and amenities of Bombay or similar cosmopolitan megalopolises. But I feel they still have some human touch that warms your feelings. This special quality is also found in capitals like Paris, Rome, London and Cairo. Yet cities like New York, Washington and Manchester do not have it at all. I have spent months in New York, but when I think of that city, no special picture comes to mind. Such a city merely leaves in our minds a vague impression of tall buildings and crowded streets lacking a personality or a spirit.

Among the genuinely individual cities, it will be readily conceded that Peking deserves a high place. Those who have seen newer capitals like London or Paris and ancient cities like Delhi, Banaras, Rome or Cairo will find the special character of Peking an unforgettable experience. The gardens, palaces, temples and spacious roads of Peking and its other rare sights are not its only claims to such a distinction. Its two thousand years of history, its tradition as an imperial capital for five hundred years and its pivotal status in Chinese affairs may also help to enhance its greatness. But Peking has an attraction beyond all these. I may perhaps call this its urbanity. Even then (before the Communists made it their capital), a stay of even two days in Peking was enough to prove that the people of that city were quite different from those of other Chinese cities. They appeared to be singularly unhurried. The shopkeepers, the cabmen and rickshaw men of Peking were punctilious in their courtesy to foreigners. In other Chinese towns, any foreigner in the streets is likely to be pestered by curious crowds. When I say that this could not happen in Peking, you can see how essentially civilized it was.

Peking is a very ancient city. There is evidence to show that there was a small town at the site of present-day Peking at the beginning of the Christian era. Up to the time of Genghis Khan the town lingered in history, sometimes waxing and sometimes waning in size. The Khan's soldiers razed it to the ground, but when his grandson Kublai was crowned emperor the site he chose for his new capital was none other! It would

be correct to say that the Peking we know was founded by the Buddhist Kublai Khan.

It is doubtful if the world has seen another emperor like Kublai. When one remembers that his empire was bigger than the British empire at its zenith, its extent may be imagined and wondered at. The whole of the Asian continent, excepting only Japan and India, came under his sway. Burma, Siam, Korea and Viet Nam paid tribute to him while on the continent of Europe, what is today Russia and its satellites were all ruled over by the Khan's generals. If ever a man deserved the title 'master of the world', this was he.

Kublai constructed this new imperial city to serve as the capital of a world empire stretching from the middle of Europe to the Pacific Ocean and from the northern extremity of Manchuria to the Bay of Bengal. It was not merely the capital of China. The Venetian Marco Polo lived for a long time in Peking as an official under the Khan. From his descriptions, one can form some idea of the size, the architectural novelty and the immense wealth of Peking.

The descendants of Kublai ruled China for a century. The Ming dynasty who ousted them and restored China's freedom shifted the capital to Nanking for a time but later reverted to Peking. Emperor Yung Lo of that dynasty is the second builder of Peking. As a monument builder, Yung Lo rivals Shah Jehan who was responsible for the Taj, the Delhi Fort, the Jama Masjid and other structures. Most of the great monuments of Peking—its gardens, its lakes, its towers and temples—were all built by Yung Lo.

Like other Chinese cities, Peking is surrounded by a wall. The size of this wall is simply staggering. Its top is broader than the Marina road on Madras beach, while its height is over forty feet. The city is contained within this great wall. The complex of imperial residences which together constitute what is known as the Forbidden City is in the heart of Peking and itself looks like a big town. Within its high walls there is accommodation for many thousand palace retainers. The imperial harem itself was enormous and it follows that the

amenities of the city were correspondingly elaborate. Artificial forests, ornamental lakes, theatres, audience chambers, machine rooms, throne rooms, the emperor's personal residences, offices, libraries, rest houses—all the adjuncts of a mighty empire have been constructed on a grand scale.

The palace buildings are all roofed with a kind of gold coloured bronze. Seen from the neighbouring hills, it looks a veritable golden city. During the empire, the production of such bronze tiles was banned except for use in the palace. Carved representations of the dragon abound and in fact the dragon was the imperial emblem. The emblem of the empress was a pair of vultures and they are also sculptured in places within the palace.

With the end of imperial rule in 1911, all these were reduced to the status of museum pieces. While most of the buildings were well preserved, because of the Chiang government's lack of resources there was not enough money for proper maintenance, with the result that when I saw Peking for the first time, these great structures looked somewhat run down.

The imperial pleasure lakes and adjoining sea palaces are linked to the inner city by a bridge of marble. Overlooking these lakes, radiant with lotuses and other colourful aquatic flowers, the emperor and his ladies spent the summer days in the sea palaces. In the Buddha temple nearby there is a huge jade image at which the emperors worshipped. The legend is that the idol was brought from Burma six hundred years ago.

The temples of Peking are renowned. Chief among them is the famous Altar of Heaven where the emperors lit the sacrificial fire. This temple is situated in the middle of a park on the south side of the city. Only the emperor could enter it and worship there. At one end of the park there is the Chai Kung palace where the emperor was supposed to fast and keep a vigil through the night, cleansed in body and mind, before starting for worship at dawn. A broad path leads from Chai Kung to the altar. Chi Nien Tin, the Temple of Heaven, itself is a lovely structure with a marble floor and a triple, tiered roof above it. The emperor kneels to make a sacrificial offering

of a spotless bull calf. This ceremony was performed twice a year to ensure the nation's welfare.

It is difficult to describe the total aesthetic effect of this place and its monuments. Certainly it is one of the world's great wonders. It is also a place of sublime purity ideally suited to the worship of God. When we went to see it, that sacred temple was used as a sanctuary by students who had fled from Manchuria during the war. These homeless refugees sought shelter under its roof and in the emperor's Hall of Abstinence they slept with their belongings as if it were an inn. I could see some people sitting on the marble balustrade of the Altar and brushing their teeth.

There are several lamaseries in Peking, an indication no doubt of the hold lamaism had on the emperors at one time. The foremost of these is the temple Yung Ho Kung, which was the headquarters of a lama called Avatirna Buddha. Even at the time of our visit, there were many novices in the temple. To see the mantra '*Om Mani Padme Hum*' written in *nagari* in several places was a moving sight to an Indian. The doctrines of the Buddha which reached even the Gobi Desert have carried also elements of Hindu culture to these remote places, which is surely one of the most astonishing facets of history.

The summer palace of Ee Ho Yuvan is situated about seven to eight miles from Peking. The words *ee ho yuvan* apparently mean 'the centenarian's delight'. Another name for this resort is Ho Shan Yuvan (Garden Lapped by Waves). These pleasure resorts of the emperors charm one not merely by their wealth of sculpture or their luxury, but because of their remarkable setting. The palaces are built on a valley beside a lake surrounded on three sides by hills. The lake is named, aptly enough, the Lake of Superior Brightness, Kun Ming Hu.

Ee Ho Yuvan abounds in palaces, pagodas, theatres and gardens but I propose to mention only a few of them here. After the destruction of many old palaces in 1861 by Europeans, the last Empress, Tzu Hsi, set about their renovation. This woman of destiny, who ruled the Chinese empire as regent and as dowager empress for well on half a century, was an

amenities of the city were correspondingly elaborate. Artificial forests, ornamental lakes, theatres, audience chambers machine rooms, throne rooms, the emperor's personal residences, offices, libraries, rest houses—all the adjuncts of a mighty empire have been constructed on a grand scale.

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With the end of imperial rule in 1911, all these were reduced to the status of museum pieces. While most of the buildings were well preserved, because of the Chiang government's lack of resources there was not enough money for proper maintenance, with the result that when I saw Peking for the first time, these great structures looked somewhat run down.

The imperial pleasure lakes and adjoining sea palaces are linked to the inner city by a bridge of marble. Overlooking these lakes, radiant with lotuses and other colourful aquatic flowers, the emperor and his ladies spent the summer days in the sea palaces. In the Buddha temple nearby there is a huge jade image at which the emperors worshipped. The legend is that the idol was brought from Burma six hundred years ago.

The temples of Peking are renowned. Chief among them is the famous Altar of Heaven where the emperors lit the sacrificial fire. This temple is situated in the middle of a park on the south side of the city. Only the emperor could enter it and worship there. At one end of the park there is the Chai Kung palace where the emperor was supposed to fast and keep a vigil through the night, cleansed in body and mind, before starting for worship at dawn. A broad path leads from Chai Kung to the altar. Chi Nien Tin, the Temple of Heaven, itself is a lovely structure with a marble floor and a triple, tiered roof above it. The emperor kneels to make a sacrificial offering

of a spotless bull calf. This ceremony was performed twice a year to ensure the nation's welfare.

It is difficult to describe the total aesthetic effect of this place and its monuments. Certainly it is one of the world's great wonders. It is also a place of sublime purity ideally suited to the worship of God. When we went to see it, that sacred temple was used as a sanctuary by students who had fled from Manchuria during the war. These homeless refugees sought shelter under its roof and in the emperor's Hall of Abstinence they slept with their belongings as if it were an inn. I could see some people sitting on the marble balustrade of the Altar and brushing their teeth.

There are several lamaseries in Peking, an indication no doubt of the hold lamaism had on the emperors at one time. The foremost of these is the temple Yung Ho Kung, which was the headquarters of a lama called Avatirna Buddha. Even at the time of our visit, there were many novices in the temple. To see the mantra '*Om Mani Padme Hum*' written in *nagari* in several places was a moving sight to an Indian. The doctrines of the Buddha which reached even the Gobi Desert have carried also elements of Hindu culture to these remote places, which is surely one of the most astonishing facets of history.

The summer palace of Ee Ho Yuvan is situated about seven to eight miles from Peking. The words *ee ho yuvan* apparently mean 'the centenarian's delight'. Another name for this resort is Ho Shan Yuvan (Garden Lapped by Waves). These pleasure resorts of the emperors charm one not merely by their wealth of sculpture or their luxury, but because of their remarkable setting. The palaces are built on a valley beside a lake surrounded on three sides by hills. The lake is named, aptly enough, the Lake of Superior Brightness, Kun Ming Hu.

Ee Ho Yuvan abounds in palaces, pagodas, theatres and gardens but I propose to mention only a few of them here. After the destruction of many old palaces in 1861 by Europeans, the last Empress, Tzu Hsi, set about their renovation. This woman of destiny, who ruled the Chinese empire as regent and as dowager empress for well on half a century, was an

omnipotent figure cast in the mould of Cleopatra, Elizabeth of England, Noor Jehan and Catherine of Russia. When she took over the reigns of government after throwing the emperor into prison, she chose this wave-tossed resort as her retreat. As we enter, there is a covered gallery nearly one mile long flanking the lake. The roof of the gallery is decorated with many paintings. It is indisputably the world's longest gallery. The various palaces are reached from this gallery through a series of arbours.

From the end of the gallery one can see the ultimate example of a tyrant's folly—the Marble Ship. The Chinese rulers, jealous of Japan's navy power, decided to build a navy for themselves and even raised the money. But the empress used the money not to build ships but to renovate and improve this Summer Palace. However, she paid symbolic respect to the object by also building a single ship, which is this Marble Ship. It is built in water in the shape of a boat and in fact, tied beside it is a real motor launch gifted to the empress by the Emperor of Japan.

Of the many Buddha temples here the most noteworthy are the Cloud Palace Temple, the Temple of a Thousand Buddhas and the Porcelain Pagoda. The Temple of a Thousand Buddhas is on the top of a hill, but it lacks the beauty of the Cloud Palace. The Porcelain Pagoda is set on a hillside and is surrounded by trees and greenery. When the bright rays of the sun fall on the pagoda, there is an illusion of jewelled splendour.

The wonders of Peking are endless. The European mania for collecting antiques and novelties finds, as can be imagined, full scope in Peking. There are in fact special streets dealing in such curios. In the Jade Street or the Street of Tailors, for instance, one can see visitors from all over the world clamouring to buy these shapely but often faked and useless antiques.

We spent two weeks in Peking. My eminent friend, Dr Hu Shih, President of the National University of Peking, had asked me earlier to deliver some lectures. This renowned scholar was Chinese Ambassador to America for four years and I had the

privilege of knowing him from that time. I could not refuse. Having accepted the invitation from the National University, I had to respond to invitations from the other five universities and other institutions. The result was that during the fortnight I stayed in Peking, I made ten speeches on Indian affairs. Five of them have been published by the Government of India under the title *The Background of India.*[1]

There were at that time ten students reading at Peking University under Government of India scholarships. Of these, three were studying Chinese painting and one the Chinese system of medicine, while the rest were pursuing general studies. The Principal of the National University's School of Painting was the internationally famous painter, Fu Pi-yon. I had seen an exhibition of his work fifteen years earlier in Paris. He had lived in India for two years and knew all about Indian painting. He had also met Gandhiji and Tagore. Learning of my presence in Peking, he was good enough to mount an exhibition of his paintings in my honour.

After two weeks of seeing and enjoying the many-faceted glories of Peking, my wife and I returned to Nanking.

28

Revolution in Peking

On my return to Nanking, I found that the gathering storm had indeed broken over North China in September and given rise to unutterable confusion. The crisis facing Nanking can be gauged by the fact that in fifteen days nearly one and a half million troops had surrendered to the Communists and the major provinces of North China and Manchuria had already been lost. All was gloom in the capital. In fact even the celebration of the National Day on 10 October was dropped in 1948. There was an air of general defeatism. The rich in their thousands were already leaving the city with their belongings. By train, by road and on foot the exodus swelled. Political parties were in despair. To add to the deepening crisis, the Chinese dollar took a sudden dive in value. The gold yuan paper notes depreciated in value by over one-third in a single week. Goods soared in price and many essential goods disappeared from the market. The price of one bag of rice was the equivalent of six hundred rupees and other articles went up proportionately.

As disaster loomed large, political leaders openly advocated Chiang Kai-shek's resignation and a negotiated truce with the Communists. But Chiang himself remained unshaken. Like a mountain buffeted by storms, he stood immovable, steadfast. The other leaders had neither the strength to challenge nor the courage to oppose him. Yet it was plain that Chiang's day was ending, and with the daily catalogue of defeats, dejected politicians and soldiers were capitulating to the enemy.

When the dissensions in the Kuomintang Party in Nanking were at their peak, Madame Chiang one day sent a gift of large and lovely chrysanthemums from the presidential palace to my wife. This was a time when she was subjected to violent

attacks in Parliament and outside. On all sides she was dubbed a traitor and her evil genius was blamed for the catastrophe. I was therefore surprised at this gift. That evening I met the wife of the British Ambassador at a party and asked her if Madame Chiang had sent anything to her. I learned that she too had received a bunch of chrysanthemums but no other embassy had. We were not left wondering for long about the significance of this. The next morning the news flashed around the world that Madame Chiang had left China for America.

Her departure was almost the curtain-ringer in the final scene of a dire tragedy. Even though she brought her country to total defeat in the civil war, Mai Ling Soong certainly helped to shape its history for a time by dint of her extraordinary astuteness and intelligence, and the position of authority she held. Many doubt if her twenty-five year ascendancy did any good to her country, but even they cannot gainsay her ability or her power.

Nevertheless, Chiang fought on alone for another month, without yielding to his opponents within the party. In the end he too was forced to resign on 22 January 1949. Subsequent events need no recounting. The Acting President Li tried to negotiate a truce with the Communists but when this attempt failed, he and the government abandoned the capital and fled to the southernmost corner of China, to the city of Canton.

While the truce negotiations brought about a lull in fighting, I came away to India for a period of three weeks. My journey had several purposes, the main one being to brief the Prime Minister on the true state of affairs in China and to take advice from him and senior officials of the Ministry. They could not appreciate the gravity of the situation from a distance, nor estimate its possible impact on India and neighbouring countries. What should be India's policy in this changed situation? If the insurgents seized power, how should we deal with the new authorities? If America quarrelled with the Communists and severed diplomatic relations with them, what attitude should we adopt? All these called for thought and decision.

I arrived in Delhi on 26 March and left it for Nanking on 16 April. In between I had to go down to Travancore for a few days to finalize a partition in our family that had become necessary. Actually, this left me only twelve days in Delhi, but I managed to meet Nehru five or six times and to sort out the various problems that needed solution.

The reason for my haste was that I had left my wife and children in Nanking in the confident expectation that no serious trouble would occur within the month. But the reports that came in from day to day were alarming. After the breakdown of the truce negotiations with the Communists the newspapers even reported one day that there was gunfire in Nanking! If this were indeed true, there was no knowing what would happen to Nanking where my family would be marooned.

I reached Shanghai on 18 April in the evening. Providentially, the impending disaster held off till then. I left for Nanking the same night in what was the last train that the Kuomintang administration ran from Shanghai, the next day's train having been stopped midway. It would thus be true to say that I managed to return at the eleventh hour and even another day's delay would have meant that when the Communists occupied Nanking my family would have been under their control and I myself outside.

The total change in the fortunes of war was evident from the appearance of Nanking which was sunk in an indescribable silence. Only the common people of China, accustomed to many vicissitudes in their time, went about their daily occupations indifferent to the coming change of rulers. But there was no traffic on the roads except for a few embassy cars with their flags flying. Most shops were closed. Only the sky was filled with the constant noise of aircraft presumably carrying away Kuomintang chiefs and their belongings to safety.

It was common knowledge by then that President Li had received an ultimatum from the Communists setting the evening of 20 April as the deadline for conceding their demands, failing which the Communist army would cross the Yangtse

and enter the city. There a was strong section of the Kuomintang which held that the ultimatum should be accepted in the interest of peace and President Li himself inclined to their view. Up to three in the afternoon of 20 April most of us expected the peace party to prevail, but even at this final hour, Chiang Kai-shek's unbending and unconquerable will asserted itself. When he informed President Li that he would not permit acceptance of the Communist terms, the anti-surrender group regained ascendancy. The American Ambassador also advised that the Communist terms should not be accepted.

At eleven the next morning there was a meeting of Ambassadors and Ministers at the French embassy, the French Ambassador being then the doyen of the diplomatic corps. The meeting was called to review a message received by him from the Chinese government on the situation. The gist of the message was that the Communists had crossed the Yangtse at midnight to the east and west of the capital and were due to enter the city itself in the course of the next day. The diplomats were advised to leave the city and accompany the government that afternoon failing which the government could not accept any responsibility for their safety. None of us was prepared to follow a government that was fleeing its capital for an unknown destination. No one stopped to reflect what their situation would be if the Communists occupied Nanking. They felt it would be unbecoming to desert their posts at this hour. If we had known that the Communists would not recognize our diplomatic status and would harass and insult us in many ways, I am not sure how many of us would have stuck to this decision. Pandit Nehru had instructed me to stay on in Nanking at all costs and I had no hesitation therefore in this matter, while I naturally hoped that others would also do likewise.

During that night, all the Kuomintang officials left Nanking. When the next day, the 22nd, dawned, there was not a single policeman to be seen on the streets. By ten we heard rumours that looting had begun and several big buildings were on fire. Until the Communist army entered, the city was thus in a state of anarchy. The people were enjoying their chance to loot

the mansions so hastily vacated by the Kuomintang. Next to the Indian embassy was the official residence of the Mayor of Nanking. By nine in the morning the house was raided by looters. There was no commotion or disturbance and the stripping of the house, down to its doors and windows was accomplished in silence and almost with decorum. By three o'clock when they were finished, there was nothing to be seen of the house except its bricks. Mothers and children and even ancient crones joined in the spree. When I saw a forty-year-old woman leaving the house with a babe in one hand and stolen clothes in the other, I was struck with the 'honourable' Chinese technique of looting.

I had of course anticipated disorder of this kind in the interregnum between the change of administration. After all it is in such situations that anarchy rears its diabolic head. I even apprehended that the Chinese might be tempted to invade the houses of the helpless foreigners in their midst, especially the embassies which were known to contain many valuables. When the collapse of the Kuomintang government appeared inevitable, I decided on certain precautionary measures to protect the embassy. Luckily we had the means at hand. The American military mission which was located in Nanking to train Chinese personnel, had appointed a posse of sixty Sikhs as military police. The military mission having packed up with the collapse of the Kuomintang, these Sikhs were left without any jobs. I engaged them immediately to guard the residences of Indian nationals. When they heard about this, the other embassies of the Commonwealth also asked for these Sikh guards for their protection. Accordingly, from the first of April, these Sikh guards engaged by me took over the protection of the British, Canadian and Australian embassies also. When the danger increased, even Burma and Belgium applied for their help!

Because of these precautions, no one tried to break into the embassies even after the flight of the civil authorities and police. Even when there was looting all round, we had no fears within the embassy. These Sikh guards were old residents of China,

who knew the language well and whose size itself inspired fear in the ordinary Chinese. After the coming of Indian independence, the Sikhs were conscious of national prestige and took considerable pride in this new status and function thrust upon them.

No foreigner ventured to go out in those days. I went out once or twice in my car to see for myself what was happening, but the British Ambassador commented on the telephone that it was unwise. I risked these trips because I was confident that the Chinese did not have any hostility towards non-whites.

We had to endure a night of horror. It was known that a deputation had crossed the Yangtse to invite the Communist army to enter Nanking, but we realized that the army could not occupy the city before daybreak and even after entry, it would take them several days to restore order. The people of Nanking were in panic which was aggravated by the failure of electricity plunging the city into darkness. Without any security and under cover of darkness, the city was at the mercy of criminals. It was therefore with anxious hopes for the entry of the Communists that the ordinary Chinese spent that fearful night.

Only a few people were conscious of the fact that what happened that day would shake the whole world. A chapter of world history ended that day. The aircraft which left Nanking with the remnants of the Kuomintang party also carried with them into limbo the insecure spirit of a past age. Nobody could foresee what the new age would be like. However, we did realize that the impending changes would affect not only China, but even the distant nations of the world and their future generations.

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Dilemma

History will no doubt consider 23 April 1949 to be a momentous date. At eight in the morning that day, the Communists crossed the Yangtse, entered the capital of China and hoisted their victorious flag. The event marked the defeat not only of Chiang Kai-shek and Kuomintang China, but also that of European authority which had invaded China a century earlier. The imperialism that lasted a century had proclaimed the weakness and dependence of Eastern peoples. While the face of that imperialism changed in course of time and while the Kuomintang also revolted against the West, the war with Japan and subsequent developments merely increased their dependence on America. In the end the Kuomintang reached the stage where they could not carry on the administration without American help. After the Second World War ended, the Americans gave China millions of dollars by way of gifts and loans. It was America which helped to run Chinese industry, train Chinese armies and provided their equipment. The triumph of the Communists brought to an end the dominance of the Western powers in China.

The occupation of Nanking merely settled the ultimate fate of the campaign, but it did not spell the end of the civil war nor did it mean that the rest of the country had surrendered. Both sides knew that there was no longer anything to prevent the Communists from seizing the rest of the country and from annihilating the remnants of the Kuomintang armies. Thus the fall of Nanking made victory certain and convinced the other side of the futility of further resistance. The world also saw it as a defeat for the Europeans and although Shanghai, Canton and some similar centres were still held by the Kuomintang, no one doubted that they too would fall to the Communists very soon.

With the re-establishment of authority, the looting completely stopped. Electricity supply to houses was resumed. But everywhere one could see only Red Army troops. All the vacant houses were commandeered for housing them. At first the populace was frightened by the sight of so many armed soldiers but in a few days their fear subsided. Once they found out that these soldiers would not raid the shops or enter houses or molest the public, the citizens of Nanking started moving about freely.

Thus while the change of administration did not upset the common man unduly, our situation was quite different. The Communists informed us that until other countries recognized their government, they would not concede diplomatic status to the Ambassadors and Ministers. They also refused us facilities for confidential correspondence with our own countries. Thus not only were our normal functions disrupted, but even freedom of movement was denied us. When an order was promulgated that foreign nationals should not move outside the walls of the city, it was not difficult to see that we were being held as hostages. Nor was this the end of our worries. We were unable to get money changed either for embassy needs or for personal expenses. Every embassy needed large sums of money each month for payment of salaries and other day to day expenses. We used to convert the pound, the dollar or the rupee through banks and thus manage to meet our commitments. The Communists decreed that no foreign money should be changed and this ban lasted for about a month and a half. The hardship to many embassies this resulted in needs no emphasizing.

The British embassy could not even make salary payments and was forced to borrow fifty thousand pounds from the Communists on adverse terms. The Indian embassy was also in a similar position. Anticipating the dislocation arising from a Communist take-over, I had stored a quantity of silver dollars at heavy cost and hoped to tide over the crisis with this reserve. But it was exhausted in two weeks and we simply had no money even to buy food for the staff. Accordingly we

emulated the British and borrowed from the Communists themselves for our needs. In due course, when exchange of foreign currency was permitted, the value of foreign currencies was cut to one fourth.

It was not merely the non-recognition of embassy status that bothered us. When orders were received that the American Ambassador should not go out of his house and that the French Ambassador was under house arrest, the remaining diplomats were flabbergasted. No one knows yet what motivated such draconian measures. However, these restrictions were lifted by the Communists after a week and thereafter our movements within the city were not hindered.

But our troubles were not over. While the Communists did not ill treat us as foreigners, various difficulties arose from their refusal to accord diplomatic status and privileges to us. In every country, the cars of Ambassadors are exempt from vehicle tax. The Communists demanded huge sums from us by way of licence fee for cars. They insisted that our incoming mail should be addressed to us as ex-Ambassadors and refused to deliver letters addressed otherwise. Because of these pinpricks several Ambassadors were so fed up that they wanted to get away somehow. But this was impossible because even though the Communists had seized Shanghai within the month, the navy was still under Kuomintang control and hence no ships moved from that harbour. The Afghan Minister who went to Shanghai with his family in the hope of finding some way to leave found he was worse off and actually spent months helplessly waiting there.

Even to go to Shanghai required special permits and arrangements. One had to apply a week in advance and after permission was granted security arrangements had to be made with the department concerned. After running this gauntlet and reaching Shanghai, one had immediately to report to the police. The only concession we obtained was that the Ambassadors were allowed to do all these through their secretaries!

Another misfortune also befell us. The Kuomintang had been defeated but their air force had moved to an island near

Shanghai from where they regularly raided Nanking in an attempt to disrupt electricity and water supplies and damage railway communications. By the law of averages, one bomb scored a hit on the power house and Nanking was deprived of water and power.

The Kuomintang navy now blockaded the Chinese coast and since America connived at this illegal activity, the British did not venture to run the blockade. Commerce was thus paralysed and the price of imported goods skyrocketed. The inconvenience caused to foreign residents can be gauged from the fact that a common brand of soap cost the equivalent of twelve rupees, cooking oil fifteen rupees a pound and a bottle of face cream fifty rupees. Since cow's milk was unobtainable in China, we were using milk powder from America as a substitute. With the stoppage of imports, the price of this also went up. Lacking milk, there was no question of getting curd or butter or ghee. We were thus reduced to living in a state of siege.

To many of us the stoppage of letters and newspapers was an even greater privation. During the six months from 23 March to the end of October, no mail was delivered in Nanking. We had no means of knowing what was happening in the world outside except through the radio. I remember that in some unknown manner a packet of four letters, three newspapers and an English magazine reached me at the end of August. Perhaps they got in through a small ship which was reported to have penetrated the blockade at the time. One of the papers was a special Ulloor memorial issue of the *Mathrubhumi* weekly. It was only after seeing it on 30 August that I learned of the poet's death.

While I was not acquainted with the poet, I had read his work from childhood and hence the news of his death was distressing. As a scholar, an indefatigable literary worker and an uncompromising devotee of Malayalam, he commanded our respect. Few will deny that his life mission was to serve the language. This is not the place to adjudge the merits of his poetry or to pass on his critical opinions. At least in two

matters, the identity of Kunjan Nambiar and Unnayi Warrier, it may be that his views were cranky. However, these minor errors did not detract from the volume and value of his service to the language.

It was when reading his son's filial tribute to his father in that special number that I learned of the demise of Sahitya Kusala T. K. Krishna Menon. I had known him from 1919 onwards. While Menon was not a scholar, critic or poet like Ulloor, nor even a literary historian, he was a real lover of literature. He may be described as a patron of letters. It was he who prodded the poet Kunjikuttan Tampuran into writing his *Kadambari Katha Saram*[1] and translation of the *Suka Sandesam*[2] and *Kokila Sandesam.*[3] He was also the sponsor of the series *The Great Men of India.* Altogether Krishna Menon was a true worshipper of Kairalee.[4] He was fortunate in that his wife shared his literary interests.

With official work drying up and no other activity being open to me, I was faced with the problem of occupying myself during this semi-imprisonment. Literary work was the obvious solution and I threw myself into it whole-heartedly. I first took up the second part of my *Autobiography.* It was also at this time that I tried to translate some cantos of the *Kumara Sambhava.* I was also able to finish a book on the future of India entitled *The Quiet Revolution*[5] which was published under the *nom de plume* 'Chanakya'. But my mind was not in any of these. I had long wanted to sit down to a concentrated study of the *Bhagavad Gita* and it seemed that a better opportunity would never come. I had with me many commentaries, such as Dr Ravi Varma's chaste Malayalam version, Tilak's *Secret of the Gita,* essays of Aurobindo on the *Gita* and Radhakrishnan's English version. Thus I had no difficulty in fulfilling the desire I had nursed for so long. I also devoted this half year interregnum to a close study of Chinese history and to gain some knowledge of China's vast literature.

Although I was able to spend my time usefully in this way, I began to feel that with the entry of the Communists into Nanking my official duties had become meaningless and

should be terminated soon by some means or other. All of us were worried about this problem of escape from a dead end. From the radio commentaries we could sense the hardening of America's attitude. As China's relations with other countries worsened, the condition of foreigners in China naturally suffered. It was plain that the Chinese would regard all non-Communists as pro-American. The other Ambassadors therefore resolved to return home.

But how was this to be achieved? No foreign planes touched Shanghai or Nanking. When some of us arranged to get special planes for our journey, the Communists refused permission for them to land. Since sea traffic was blockaded by the Kuomintang, that route was also closed. Because of the civil war, the train services had broken down with the exception of the Nanking-Shanghai line. But there was no purpose in going to Shanghai only to be bottled up there. We therefore resigned ourselves to our informal imprisonment in China.

At this time a special ship was sent to Shanghai to transport American nationals leaving China. The Americans encouraged other foreigners also to leave, since they felt that such a mass exodus would isolate the Chinese government and justify American policy. I was not willing to leave by that ship for I preferred to continue my isolation rather than travel under the American flag and hoped that other arrangements would be made. Other Ambassadors from Eastern countries such as the Burmese and Egyptian also shared my view.

Orders were received in October from the Communist authorities permitting Ambassadors of countries which did not recognize their government to leave China. Soon afterwards we boarded a British ship at Shanghai and crossed to Hong Kong. The Indians there welcomed us with great heartiness, perhaps out of relief at our escape from the turmoil of the interior. During our voyage home we spent three days in Rangoon doing the sights and eventually arrived back in Calcutta.

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Among the Communists

At the time of my departure, the Communists were not in occupation of the whole of China. Their writ ran in roughly one half of the country. Although the hold of the Kuomintang over the remaining half was slipping almost daily, the Communists had not yet become the undisputed masters of that vast country. Nehru had decided that as long as the Kuomintang flag flew on the mainland, we should not recognize the Communist government, but if Chiang left the mainland and shifted to Formosa or some other place, then we could think about recognition. I was temporarily posted to the Selection Board of the Public Service Commission dealing with recruitment to the Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Foreign Service. We visited the major cities of India to interview candidates who had passed the written tests. It was quite interesting work. But even after a month or two, the way was not open for the restoration of diplomatic ties with China and Nehru asked me if I would agree to go as High Commissioner to Pakistan which was something of a ticklish post at the time. While this was under consideration, the telegram of the Chinese government agreeing to my appointment was received and I therefore proceeded to Peking instead of Karachi.

If that telegram had come two days later, my subsequent career would have been materially alrered. I had no illusions thar I would be able to bring about any change in Indo-Pakistan relations, because they were not based entirely on political factors, nor were they amenable to analysis on a purely pragmatic plane. Consequently my appointment to Karachi could not reasonably lead to any material success. But having been used to difficult assignments all my life, I was inclined to try my hand at this challenging one too. If I had gone to Karachi

and failed to achieve any significant success, my future would certainly have taken a different turn.

At the same time, none of us doubted that the mission to China was an even more difficult assignment and a task of great importance to boot. The general impression was that a new world was taking shape in Peking, but no one would hazard a guess as to its long term potential. Even anti-Communists did not hold any dogmatic opinions on Chinese affairs in those early days, especially because nobody knew the leaders of the new China at first hand. The names of Mao Tse-tung, Chu Teh and Chou En-lai were only just getting into the headlines. What sort of men were these who had brought off a revolution of this dimension, were they interested in international friendship and peace so as to concentrate on the strengthening and development of their country or were they intoxicated by their success and inclined to take on all comers? These were some of the questions that foreign statesmen were asking. In any event I went to Peking gratified at the opportunity my assignment gave me to watch and study at close quarters the aftermath of a historic revolution.

The journey to Peking was not easy. The Communists did not allow foreign aircraft to overfly their territory nor did they have an air service at the time. As for the old Canton-Peking railway, it had been badly disrupted by years of civil war and lacked a reliable track and bridges at a number of places. The only solution was to go by boat from Nanking to Tientsin. Tientsin was another port developed by Europeans like Shanghai and later improved by the Japanese. After the war, it reverted to Chinese hands and served as the port of entry for Peking.

The worst part of the trip was the lap between Nanking and Tientsin, where the boats were menaced by pirates who often planted their spies in the third class. The steamer companies used to keep special guards round the third class deck and prohibit any movement outside it. Even more serious than the pirates was the threat from Kuomintang warships which were hard at work worrying shipping from Chinese ports in their effort to stifle the Communists' trade. They used to stop ships

at mid-sea and those that refused to obey were sunk. Luckily we travelled by a British steamer which could expect protection from British naval vessels then patrolling the China Sea in the interests of their trade. We therefore did not apprehend any raid or seizure by the Kuomintang.

The voyage from Nanking to Tientsin took four days. I have never undergone a more uncomfortable journey than in that small and cramped vessel. It was a great relief to disembark at Tientsin where we were received with notable courtesy by the Communist authorities. Welcome speeches and toasts were offered on the steamer itself, an innovation adopted by the Communists. The ceremonies ran to form and next day we left for Peking.

I have dealt with my stay in Peking in my English work *In Two Chinas*[1] which has also come out in Malayalam. Since that book is in reality a part of this autobiography, I do not wish to repeat the same material here. Moreover I have written another book in Malayalam about a long journey I made in China. I shall therefore merely deal with one or two points which were inadequately covered in those books.

The most momentous events of my term in China were the Korean war and the invasion of Tibet. As for the internal changes in China, which were fundamental and perhaps unprecedented, it would be out of place to describe them in this book. Judged from any viewpoint, the Korean war is an event of the utmost interest to historians. The victorious American forces were pushing towards the frontier of China when the Chinese, in what looked like blind desperation, sought to challenge them. After all, barely fifty years ago a mere two thousand white soldiers seized the Chinese capital of Peking itself. Moreover the world now knew that the military machine of Chiang Kai-shek who had ruled the country two years earlier was just a 'paper tiger', to use a current phrase popular in the Communist world. Whatever other qualities and abilities the Chinese possessed, the world at large tended to discount their fighting skill. Opposing them was the United States, the victor in two world wars, acclaimed the world's greatest

power on land, sea and air alike. The war started as an internal struggle between South Korea (American partisan) and North Korea (Communist partisan). America and her allies considered the war to be really a test case of Communist expansionism and accordingly sponsored a United Nations resolution authorizing sixteen nations to set up an Expeditionary Force under the command of the famous General MacArthur to enter the war in aid of South Korea. All along the Chinese protested loudly that this war was taking place on their borders and they would not tolerate foreign intervention. Even after the U. N. forces entered the fray, Chinese threats continued to be verbal and the Americans exultantly concluded that they were backing down.

In the telegrams I was regularly sending to Delhi, I had stressed my own opinion that China would intervene in the war. The substance of my messages had been passed on to America through the British Foreign Office. President Truman admits in his memoirs[2] that he and other American leaders dismissed my views as negligible. General MacArthur was convinced that the Chinese would never wage an open war.

It was at this juncture that early in October I received a midnight call from Chou En-lai desiring to see me. I have described this historic interview in detail in the book *In Two Chinas*. The upshot was: 'If the Americans and their friends enter North Korea, China will also enter the war. We will not permit America to conquer North Korea and to approach our borders, come what may and however many atomic bombs the Americans possess.' The interview matched the gravity of the situation. It was clear to me that this was a formal policy declaration and that China had already completed her arrangements for entering the war and thus transforming the so-called civil war into an international struggle whose consequences were incalculable. I therefore sent a detailed report to Prime Minister Nehru the same night omitting nothing that Chou-En-lai had said and added my own clear assessment. Realizing the seriousness of the message, Nehru immediately transmitted its substance to Anthony Eden and to the American State

Department. I understand that Eden endorsed those views but the Americans had nothing but contempt for Chou's warning and my assessment. President Truman in his memoirs admits that this was a mistake.

If America had heeded the warning and refrained from crossing the 52nd parallel, world history itself would have been different. But that is water under the bridge. The Americans disregarded the Chinese warning as an empty threat, my opinions as undependable and ordered their troops to move into North Korea. Not long after the Chinese forces also crossed the Yalu and confronted the Americans. What resulted was incredible. The Chinese who were defeated by a mere two thousand white soldiers fifty years earlier now stood up to the Americans. The hitherto unbeaten American army now had its first taste of a military setback. The Americans after their first retreat managed to hold the Chinese at the South Korean border, but General MacArthur was recalled. Thousands of soldiers were killed. For the first time the Americans forewent a military victory and agreed to a truce, demonstrating to the world the growing military might of Communist China.

From the moment of the Chinese entry into the Korean war, the government of India's efforts were concentrated on bringing the two parties together to reach a truce. The task of persuading the Chinese fell on me. I had to convey the American proposals to the Chinese, discuss them, obtain their reactions and pass these on to the government of India. I have described the complexities of the task and how eventually both parties were brought together in the book *In Two Chinas.*

The other major event was the invasion of Tibet. Though Tibet is not a province of China, the British and after them the government of India have acknowledged Chinese suzerainty over Tibet. In fact, every country in the world has accepted this. The Americans who supported the Kuomintang had no doubt at any time that Tibet was subject to Chinese authority. While this was the position in international law, the extension of Communist power to Tibet was a prima facie danger to India. Thus India took up a position supporting Tibet's inter-

nal autonomy and opposing Chinese military presence there. Not once but several times I had conveyed India's protest to the Chinese government on this subject. Although there were some border skirmishes at first, eventually the Chinese army entered Tibet under the terms of an armistice.

As soon as it was apparent that China would enter Tibet, I began pressing our government that our army should proceed to the MacMahon Line and secure our frontiers. But this was easier said than done. In 1950 Indian forces were located to the south of the Line. The difficulties of the terrain not to speak of its great height made troop movement difficult and called for heavy investment in roads and other facilities. If the Chinese entrenched themselves in Tibet, our north-eastern borders would be weakened and this was why I advocated strengthening of our defences there.

I mention this because of the controversy following the dispute with China. I realized the gravity of the situation right from the moment the Chinese entered Tibet. Not only did I inform the government about my fears in my telegrams, I have also unequivocally stressed this point in my book *Geographical Factors in Indian History*.[3]

All through the winter of 1950-51 my wife was ill. The doctors diagnosed her illness as rheumatism and due to the extreme cold, but as she could not breathe lying down, she was forced to spend day and night in a sitting posture. Once or twice we even feared for her life. In view of this experience, doctors advised that we should not stay in Peking to face another winter. Although she regained something like normal health in the warmer months, I requested Nehru to recall me from Peking before the following November.

With the approach of summer, my wife improved sufficiently to permit me to think of travelling round China. My purpose was not only to find out what was happening in China at the time, but also to discover certain points of contact between China and India in earlier history. Details of the results of my enquiries are given in my book *A Journey through China*,[4] so I will not repeat myself here.

Nehru had agreed to recall me before winter but when I reminded him about this in October, he proposed a different solution. He asked me to come away during winter to India but wanted me to go back to my post for at least six months afterwards. The Korean truce talks were moving forward very slowly and Nehru thought it would be better if I continued to join in them. I agreed and accordingly returned from China in October.

On our way home we stayed for about a week in Canton. I wished to see the birthplace of Sun Yat-sen which was not far from Canton. Most of the overseas Chinese who had emigrated to different South-East Asian countries in search of trade or employment came from this part of the country, which was reputed to be quite different from the rest of China. This was another point which excited my curiosity and led to this diversion.

Our trip to the interior was along the River Pearl. We spent a night on a steamboat in the same way as one used to travel from Alleppey to Cochin. The landscape which met our eyes when we disembarked in the morning was resplendent with canals and paddy-fields reminding me of our home village in Kerala. One thing that struck us was the presence of at least one or two substantial whitewashed bungalow-type dwellings in even the smallest village. Their style was not the traditional Chinese. Some of the buildings, we found, belonged to millionaire traders. It transpired that they were the original homes of rich overseas Chinese, who with their strong tradition of ancestor worship took it as a duty to renovate their old homes to satisfy the spirits of their forbears.

The family home of Sun Yat-sen was also foreign in style. Sun's elder brother was an emigrant in Hawaii who made good there. Sun himself grew up in that island. He was also a Christian at one time. All this explained why the ancestral dwelling was rebuilt in foreign style.

After this detour from Canton we returned directly to Delhi.

The U.N. Assembly convened that year in Paris and I was appointed deputy leader of our delegation. Nehru had en-

trusted me with the job of meeting important political figures in Paris and London and to give them first-hand information about events in China, of which there was still insufficient knowledge in Europe. This meant that I devoted myself to meeting British and French statesmen and talking to them about what was happening in China, Korea and Tibet. Our High Commissioner in London was V. K. Krishna Menon whom I had known from early youth. He was good enough to give me all assistance during my stay in London, in particular introducing me to senior Ministers as also to people like Lord Mountbatten, Attlee and Bevan. Indeed, Krishna Menon was very friendly.

Poet Vallathol's long poem on Mary Magdalene had been translated into English and at Krishna Menon's instance, a British publisher was to publish it. He told me that the publishers desired me to write a foreword dealing with the work and its author. Accordingly, I wrote a brief foreword while in London.

After six weeks, a little before the end of the session, I returned from Paris. Almost immediately, I arranged for my wife's stay in Dehra Dun with my eldest daughter and went back to Peking. The Korean truce talks were dragging on. Although Sino-Indian relations were developing on friendly lines at the time, there were some areas, specifically Tibet, where we were facing difficulties. At the same time, India was still experiencing a shortage of food and we were endeavouring to import some rice and millets from China. While I was occupied with all this, I received news of the forthcoming visit of an official goodwill mission headed by Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit. Only the previous year Pandit Sundarlal had come to China with some Communist sympathizers. Among them were Mulk Raj Anand, Prof V. K. R. V. Rao and Editor Karanjia of *Blitz*. They harped on the '*Bhai bhai*' theme too much and in general appeared more sinophile than the Chinese themselves. But since I knew most of them I was able to steer them clear of any serious complications. Fortunately the team accompanying Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit was quite differ-

ent. The scholar-politician, Acharya Narendra Dev, Nawab Zain Yar Jung, Editor Frank Moraes of *The Times of India*, the celebrated physicist, Prof Bhagavantam, the danseuse Kumari Shanta Rao, embodied distinction in many fields. A group more different from Sundarlal's crowd can hardly be imagined. The difference was not merely in status or scholarship. The newcomers were mostly people who wanted to observe Chinese affairs impartially and without preconceptions, while the earlier set were mostly Chinese partisans. With a background of wordly and political wisdom, the new team came to admire all that was good in China, while being aware of what was not so good.

The Chinese government received Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit and her group with signal courtesy. Receptions and banquets were the order of the day. Mao Tse-tung received them and talked at some length to Vijayalakshmi and myself. The ballet produced in their honour at Peking is said to have been specially devised by Chou En-lai himself. The festivities at Shanghai were equally elaborate. Shanghai was at that time governed by Chen Yi who later became Foreign Minister. He was not only a successful General of the army but was also a poet and lover of music. We arranged a programme of Indian dance to which he responded with one of theirs, which was admittedly very beautiful.

With the return of this goodwill mission I considered that my spell in Peking was over and soon enough I received Nehru's instructions to return to India. The authorities showed elaborate courtesy in arranging a round of farewell parties and dinners for me. All the Ambassadors, the deputy Foreign Minister, the Foreign Minister Chang Han-fu and many senior officials came to the railway station. I felt greatly honoured when my good friend the Swiss Ambassador Clement Ressonko, who later served for four years as Ambassador to India, accompanied me up to Shanghai.

Altogether I spent more than two years in Communist China. During that time India and China were on fairly good terms but it would not be correct to say that they trusted each



1 As the editor of *The Hindustan Times* in 1923

Ambassador to China in 1951. With Chairman Mao Tse-Tung on Indian Republic Day in Peking



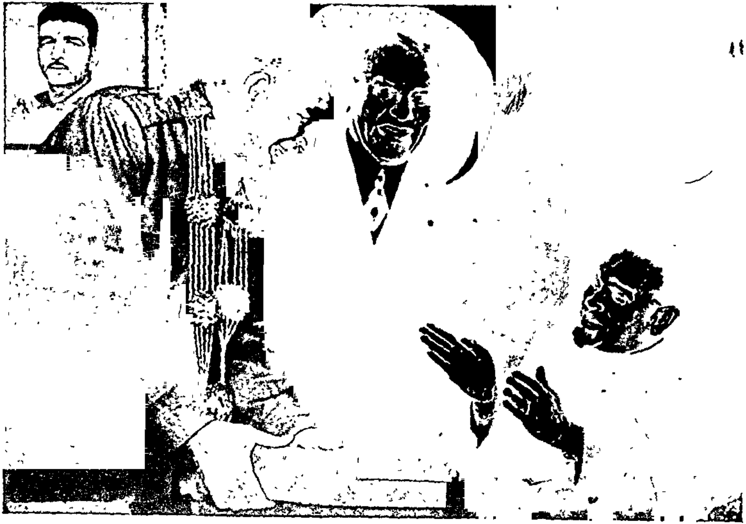


3 With Chou en-Lai in 1951 at the Indian ...



4 With Vallathol in 1952





6 Ambassador to Egypt in 1952. Gen Neguib receives a copy of *The Mahabharata* in Arabic at a function of the Indo-Egyptian Foundation in Cairo



7 Talking to Col Anwar el Sadat at a party in Cairo in [illegible]



8 With daughter Radha in Paris in 1956

In 1925 when I went to Portugal I visited the port of Bele from which Vasco da Gama set out on his fateful voyage to Indi and marvelled at the momentous changes unleashed on the worl by that trivial event. It was then that the idea of writing a full scale history of European domination over the Asian conti nent had occurred to me. But it was a vast theme involvin many countries and the historical records lay scattered i many archives in Portugal, Holland, France, England an other countries.

The thought never left my mind thereafter and during m subsequent stays in France, Holland and England I used t find some time to give to this project. But however keenly desired it, this project would never have been achieved bu for my stay as ambassador in Communist China. My si months of virtual imprisonment in Nanking were devoted to careful study of Chinese history and it was then that I gained complete picture of European domination in the Far East.

It was during my stay in Peking that circumstances com bined to make the writing of this major piece of history possi ble. The library of the British embassy in Peking containe many books giving data on the subject. So also at the Pekin University of Payda, records of missionary activities wer available in the library of the Catholic episcopal church. I took six months of unceasing effort to complete the book I showed the manuscript first to Prof V. K. R. V. Rao wh came to Peking in 1951 with Pandit Sundarlal. When I went t India during the winter and later to Europe, I had the types cript of the book[5] which I handed over to my London publi shers, George Allen and Unwin.

Apart from this major work, I also wrote some Malayala pieces at the time. The poems I wrote then have been collecte in the book *Swatantrya Sourabham*[6] while the verse translatio of the Chinese play, *Western Room*[7], which I used to do dail came out as another book. The book, *A Journey through China* was also written during this period. These various litera efforts helped to relieve my life in China in a special and happy way.

31

Egypt and West Asia

Nehru had told me even before my return to China that I would be posted to a climate kinder to my wife's health and all considerations pointed to Egypt. However, a minor obstacle arose when the time came. The Egyptian government notified all States that ambassadors would be accredited only if their credentials acknowledged the King of Egypt to be also the King of the Sudan. Since Britain was administering the Sudan at the time, such an arrangement was not agreeable to the British government. But Nehru accepted my argument that as Egyptian sovereignty over the Sudan was unquestioned, the formal acknowledgment of this in the Letter of Accreditation to the King would not result in any abridgment of British authority. Nevertheless these discussions took up nearly six weeks which I spent in the Ministry of External Affairs by way of 'special duty' doing nothing! During this time I was invited to give some lectures at the Delhi School of Economics, which were later published in book form under the title *Diplomacy*.[1]

There were some special reasons for my posting to Egypt. Apart from the Sudan, my diplomatic assignment extended also to Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Libya. All of them were Moslem States and Pakistan was conducting vigorous anti-Indian propaganda there. At the time, India had little influence in the area. The principal aim of our diplomacy was to consolidate our position in that region. Moreover, shortly before my arrival in Cairo, King Farouk of Egypt had been deposed by a coup and a military junta under General Neguib had assumed power. I anticipated that these developments would certainly affect India. It was therefore clear to me that my diplomatic responsibilities in the Middle East would be no less onerous than those in China.

One week before my departure, I heard from Delhi University that an Honorary Doctorate of Letters for me had been proposed the previous year and it would now be conferred at a Special Convocation. President Rajendra Prasad would preside over the convocation. Although I have received honorary doctorates from other universities subsequently, none of them gave me the pleasure I got from receiving this degree at the hands of the President.

In a memorable speech, the Vice-Chancellor, Dr S. N. Sen (himself an eminent historian), touched on some aspects of my work. Although he laid stress on my work as ambassador in China, he did not omit my work in the fields of history and literature. The President also spoke. In my speech of acceptance I said that the place of the Dravidian languages in Indian culture should not be overlooked and that it was a matter for regret that a university like Delhi had no provision for Tamil or Malayalam studies. Everyone thought this marked the end of the Convocation. But this was not so. The President took the opportunity to speak again. He said that those who did not recognize the equal importance of North India and South India merely betrayed their ignorance of India's cultural history. The substance of his speech was: 'We can grasp this from one fact. While all the Hindu avatars were born in the North, all the Hindu *acharyas*[2] were South Indians. Our culture is the product of both.'

I left for Caïro two days later. The plane from India used to arrive in those days at Cairo at 1 a.m. In spite of the odd hour, we received a formal welcome. Our charge d'affaires, V. A. M. Nair, Second Secretary Venkateswaran and other officials were at the airport.

V. A. M. Nair entered the diplomatic service via the I. C. S. By dint of competence and industry he soon rose to ambassadorial level and held the office of ambassador in several embassies. Venkateswaran is a Brahmin and belongs to Kerala. His intelligence, character and above all his ability to master complicated problems, mark him out as one of the most promising younger men in the Ministry of External Affairs. It

may be mentioned that Venkateswaran had a considerable flair for languages.

The Indian ambassador's .residence was a government building located in a garden on the bank of the Nile. Its reception room overlooked the river and one could watch the slow progress of traffic on the river. Our staff used to work in the basement of the building, but I soon transferred the office to a rented building.

Egyptian affairs were somewhat unsettled at the time. Although Farouk had been deposed a fortnight earlier, the country was ruled by a regency nominally representing the King's son. Although power vested in a revolutionary council, an old courtier, Ali MeherPasha, was the titularPrimeMinister. Soon it was evident that the Revolutionary Council, too, was not what it seemed. Although its President was General Neguib, the real leader was a young man called Gamal Abdel Nasser of whom few people had heard till then. This was the state of affairs in Egypt when I arrived there.

After presenting my credentials to the Regency Council, my first duty was to establish contact with other ambassadors and with leading figures in Egypt's public life. The former is of course routine, but fortunately for me the British ambassador Sir Ralph Stevenson had formerly been ambassador to Nanking. I knew him andwe liked and trusted each other. He told me that the senior diplomats were the ambassadors of the U. S. A. and France (Cauffrey and Couve de Murville). It would be useful to win their goodwill and to get to know the Arab League ministers. The rest were not of great moment. The advice proved correct. Cauffrey was an able diplomat with experience of major capitals like Paris. He was inclined to be anti-British and suspicious of British policy—not surprising in view of his Irish ancestry. I learned from Cauffrey himself that he was on close terms with the Revolutionary Council and had important contacts in Egypt. Murville was a different type. One of France's most experienceddiplomats,hewas reticent and formal. It took me many months' acquaintance to win his friendship.

The Arab League ministers enjoyed a special status in Egypt.

This was not due merely to the membership of the League but to pan-Arab sentiments. Israel was a thorn in the flesh of the League, which decided to ignore and boycott it. Hence the League countries tried to work as a group and to co-ordinate their foreign policies. Yet like most families, this family also had its differences. The main dissidents were Iraq and Jordan, both of whom were British satellites at the time. Although the Arab ambassadors were mostly rich aristocrats, only one among them stood out by education and intelligence. This was a young man named Nadim Dimiyishke, who officiated for the Lebanese ambassador. Thirty-five-year-old Dimiyishke allied himself closely to the Revolutionary Council whose members were mostly of his age.

Convention decrees that one should call on all the ambassadors formally. Often this takes months. One meets and converses in the meanwhile, but until the formal call is paid, no return visits or invitations can be expected. About ten days after I had started on my round of calls, Vice-President Dr Radhakrishnan came to Cairo as my guest. We were in a sense old friends as I had known him from the time he was a Professor at Calcutta. Our close friendship really began from the time he became Professor at Oxford. Radhakrishnan needs no introduction. He was a profound scholar of Hindu and Buddhist philosophy, an independent thinker, liberal in his views on social problems, a balanced judge of world affairs and an urbane philosopher. Before leaving for Egypt I had invited him to visit us.

A fortnight after reaching Cairo I received a telegram to the effect that he was soon going to Europe and would be glad to spend three days in Cairo. Although the news was welcome, it did cause considerable headache, since I myself was new to Cairo and had not established wide enough contacts in government circles or outside. How then could I present the Vice-President to others? Since my round of formal calls was incomplete, would enough diplomats attend any reception I might hold? In this predicament, I went to Ralph Stevenson, who readily agreed to persuade all the ambassadors who

counted to accept my invitation and to use his connections to bring in others also.

My next concern was with the leading figures in the government. At that time India and Egypt were not as friendly as today. I was therefore not in a position to anticipate how they would receive the Indian Vice-President on this unofficial visit. Any failure to honour him would be a discourtesy to India and a personal rebuff to me. I was not idle. I called on the new Foreign Secretary Mohammed Fawzi. He agreed to receive Dr Radhakrishnan with appropriate honours. He advised me to meet General Neguib and tell him about the visit. I did so and discovered that Neguib was pleased by the Vice-President's visit. In the event, government representatives were there when Dr Radhakrishnan landed and received him with the honours that protocol demanded. But there was a further embarrassment. Dr Radhakrishnan did not have an inoculation certificate without which he could not leave the airport. I was nonplussed but decided to make an appeal to General Neguib himself. When I telephoned the General, I was told that he was sleeping. I had to stress the urgency of the matter and declare that it concerned the Vice-President of India before he could be awakened. Soon I heard the General's voice and as soon as I explained my problem, he ordered the Airport Officer over the telephone to exempt Dr Radhakrishnan from the regulations.

Radhakrishnan spent three days in Cairo as my guest. In the receptions I held in his honour, important citizens and politicians participated, as also businessmen and ambassadors. On one evening Dr Radhakrishnan gave a talk on the *Gita* to the embassy staff and their wives.

Before his departure I arranged an interview with General Neguib and accompanied Radhakrishnan as protocol demanded. The conversation went off pleasantly and before leaving, Radhakrishnan made a solemn exhortation: 'Remember one thing, General. Today you and your associates are men of integrity and restraint. But you are all-powerful. Power is intoxicating. If you see that it does not go to your heads, it

will be to your country's and your own good. Otherwise both will suffer.' These were words of advice from an older man and General Neguib was visibly moved by the dignity and high seriousness of Radhakrishnan. On a later occasion he told me that he considered it his good fortune to have met Radhakrishnan.

The three days we spent with Radhakrishnan were almost a religious festival! While motoring or dining or merely sitting about, Dr Radhakrishnan had a fund of quotations from *bhajans*,[3] the Upanishads and devotional poetry. The thought of God was never far from his mind, as we could see when at dinner-time once he recited the first line of *Bhaja Govindam* (' Worship Govinda, worship Govinda, worship him all the time, fickle mind ') and turned quizzically to watch his neighbour's reaction.

Two days after Radhakrishnan left, Kaka Kalelkar arrived in Cairo. I was only slightly acquainted with this old disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. He was on a mission to propagate Indian culture among Indians residing in Africa. As there was some hitch in getting a visa to Kenya, the government of India had advised him to stop at Cairo till it was obtained and I invited him to stay with me. Kaka Kalelkar was an extraordinary individual. Although born in Maharashtra and a noted scholar in Marathi, he won laurels as a writer in Gujarati! He was also a profound Sanskrit scholar. While he had an abiding respect for Indian culture, it was his conviction that many of our customs needed adaptation before our culture could have a universal appeal. He spent fifteen days with me and we spent a lot of time enjoyably in literary discussions and sorting out the merits and shortcomings of Hindu culture.

Although designated ambassador to Egypt, I was accredited to other States also, as mentioned earlier. These were Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Libya. I had to visit all of them to present my credentials and to get to know their leaders and their problems. Accordingly, as soon as my preliminary work in Cairo was over, I set out on an extended tour of these countries. Apart from my wife and daughter, I was accompanied by

Venkateswaran and my Arab secretary, a Palestinian youth named Sayed. Although Sayed's official status was not high, he too was a remarkable young man. He was the only son of a prominent Palestinian family and educated in Western Europe. On his return home he entered politics only to become a refugee in the aftermath of the Arab-Israeli War, ending up in Egypt with thousands of others. Like other Palestinian refugees in Egypt, Sayed found it difficult to get work. Although his relations occupied high places in Jordan and Syria, he did not want to be a suppliant before them. Nor did those countries admit refugees at the time. It was in these circumstances that Sayed took up a ninterpreter's job in the Indian embassy.

I liked Sayed because of his birth, upbringing and character. He also rendered me a very useful service. At that time the Grand Mufti of Palestine was assisting Pakistani propaganda and while the Egyptian government did not share his views, I knew that a substantial chunk of public opinion did. When I raised the point with Sayed, he promised to set this right. He told me that the Grand Mufti was his own uncle and that he had no special bias in favour of Pakistan. If I were to make a formal call on him, the Mufti could be won over and Sayed undertook to achieve this. Evidently no one had thought of meeting the Mufti till then! Our embassy officials had adopted a negative attitude by regarding the friends of Pakistan as the enemies of India! As soon as Sayed made his proposal, I arranged for a meeting with the Mufti and an interview was accordingly fixed within 48 hours.

The Grand Mufti, Al Amin Husseini, lived in princely pomp and in fact held a titular position as 'President of Arab Palestine'. Sayed and I were received with great courtesy and after hearing my exposition of India's case, the Mufti said: 'I know that Indian leaders have some misconceptions about me, but these are unjustified. When I went to Pakistan they pressed me to make a statement on the Kashmir dispute and though I told them several times that I was neutral in that matter, I finally made a statement at their insistence with-

out going into the merits of the dispute. However, they distorted my statement and failed to publish my correction.'

I replied that it did not matter but he should now help to re-build Indo-Arab friendship. He said that that was his intention and he had already realized that Pakistan would always be pro-British. Soon afterwards, the Grand Mufti returned my visit and we received him with due courtesy. The exchange served to build friendly relations between the Grand Mufti and the Indian embassy.

It was evident that Sayed was responsible for this new turn. Other events also demonstrated his influential connections in the Arab countries and this led to his promotion as my Arab secretary, prior to my tour.

32

Palestine, Syria and Lebanon

I had long wished to see Palestine, that land sacred to the followers of three religions, the Jews, the Christians and the Moslems. Palestine is not merely the birthplace of the Jewish race, it is also the essential centre of their history. They believe it is the homeland that Jehovah promised them. Their beliefs and their ways of life revolve round this country. And it is this claim of the Jews that has led to the conflict in this region.

To the Christians, Palestine is beyond question the holiest place on earth. All the great events of the life of Christ, from the Nativity to the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, took place there. They believe that the ground between Galilee and Jerusalem is hallowed by the touch of his feet and is also sanctified as the scene of his miracles and the spot where he underwent the ultimate sacrifice. All the major locales figuring in his life are situated around Jerusalem. He was born in the village of Bethlehem only twelve miles away. It was in the River Jordan that he was baptized by John. It was in the principal temple of the Jews that the Virgin Mary performed his initiation and it was also in Jerusalem that his eventful life came to its close. The bearing of the cross, the journey to Golgotha, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection—all these climacteric events took place around Jerusalem.

Practically every corner of Palestine is full of such divine associations. It was in the little village of Bethany that Lazarus rose from the dead. It was in the house of Simon near by that Mary Magdalene anointed the feet of the Lord and thus redeemed herself. It was in the desert near Jericho that Christ spent forty days in fasting and meditation. Nazareth, the mountain of Tabor and Lake Galilee are all woven into the fabric of his life. For nineteen centuries, all denominations of

the Christian religion have held these places to be objects of pilgrimage.

To a somewhat lesser extent, Palestine is also venerated by Moslems. The tradition is that the Prophet Muhammed made his ascent to heaven from here. He is believed to have prayed in the cave situated in the temple of Solomon above which Abraham is believed to have offered the sacrifice of his son. Next to Mecca and Medina, it is their most important place of pilgrimage.

A land so much venerated by so many cannot but fascinate any observer, apart from its being a storm centre in today's international scene. It is the rival claims of the Jews and Arabs to this territory that provoked a war. The United Nations to which the dispute then went decided on partition. When this subject came up before the U. N. General Assembly in New York in 1947, I happened to be a member of the Indian delegation and although the Assembly adopted a resolution which the Indian delegation did not endorse, I suppose I am also involved in the Palestine question to that extent. The war which resulted from the U. N. decision led also to the partition of Jerusalem itself. Some eight hundred thousand homeless refugees were let loose upon the Middle East. As ambassador I was expected to familiarize myself with the problems on the spot. This accounts for my journey.

It was on 21 October that we boarded the plane at Cairo which was to take us to Amman, the capital of Jordan. All that desert area is unbearably hot in summer and correspondingly cold in winter, but October and November were considered to be the most pleasant visiting time.

The flight from Cairo to Jerusalem took two hours and that from there to Amman another forty-five minutes. My programme was to present my letter of appointment to the Regency Council and after establishing relations with the government in this way, to make a tour of Jerusalem and other places. Most of the sites of pilgrimage in Palestine are now (1962) in the area controlled by the Jordanian government. The area between Jerusalem and the River Jordan was occupied

by this State during the 1948 war. Apart from being ambassador to Egypt, I was also minister to Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Libya, which made it an official duty to present my credentials to the Regency Council. A word about Jordan and its capital may be apposite at this stage.

At the end of the First World War in 1919, the British divided Palestine into two and set up the portion east of the Jordan river, which was mostly desert, into a separate State under the Emir Abdallah. With a population of half a million and revenues of just ten million rupees, Transjordan, as it was then known, was no bigger than an average Indian princely State, but it was a vital link in the British strategic chain holding the Middle East together. The British desired to dominate all the Moslem lands between the Persian Gulf and the Syrian Gulf, but the intrusion of French influence in Syria came in their way. The British riposted with the installation of Abdallah in a separate State against Syria. Abdallah was a weak and indigent prince, depending on Britain even for money to run his administration. Abdallah's dreams of conquest rested on the Arab Legion, which was an army of Arab soldiers organized, trained and equipped by the British with a British Commander. Though small in size, the Legion was very effective in action. In the Second World War, it gave a good account of itself in that theatre of war. Its commander was the so-called Glubb 'Pasha', a short, square-built, red-faced English soldier, who was the real power behind the throne. While the urban populace did not care very much for Glubb, the Bedouin of the desert trusted and revered him. The Legion itself was open only to Bedouins.

In the 1947-48 war the Arab Legion crossed the River Jordan and seized the other part of Palestine right up to Jerusalem. At one stroke, Abdallah not only conquered the world's most celebrated city but doubled his country's population to one million. Most of the pilgrim centres thus came into Jordan's hands.

But this proved to be a pyrrhic victory for the scheming Abdallah. The Palestinian Arabs were an independent people

and were not prepared to surrender their freedom nor were they content to live in a British satellite State. The Palestine liberation protagonists have been in a state of unrest ever since, starting with an agitation for a union of Jordan and Syria. The first fruit of Abdallah's victory was his own death. In 1951 when he entered the great Mosque of Jerusalem for prayer, he was assassinated by the Palestinian freedom fighters.

Amman does not deserve the description of a city. It is little more than an overgrown village, but there is archaeological evidence to show that it was once a major town in the Roman empire. At the time of my first visit, work was afoot to equip it as State capital. Even in that small town there was a Hindu trader from Sindh. Apparently he had come to Amman with King Abdallah and because of the king's favour, his business flourished and he prospered. He told me that after the king's death, his position was not quite so happy.

We travelled by road from Amman to Jerusalem, wishing to cross the River Jordan and to see the places along the way. The Foreign Minister of Jordan had specially asked me to visit the Palestinian refugee camps run by his government and we planned to do this too.

Jordan is a unique river, running, believe it or not, through terrain that is actually below sea level. Normally the land mass is higher than the level of the oceans, but Jordan is different and there lies its uniqueness. We crossed the river and came to Jericho, whose legendary fortress collapsed at the call of Gabriel and thus fell to the Jews.

The ascent from Jericho to Jerusalem is a prospect of remarkable beauty. The city is built on hills which rise to a height of two thousand feet from the River Jordan and its churches and towers are visible from a distance. As one approaches, the skyline sorts itself out and one can see the domes of mosques and the church towers distinctly, besides being able to distinguish the different architectural styles. The florid multiple tower can only belong to the orthodox Russian Church, while the tall steeple in the distance that seems to defy all its neighbours is quite in the Lutheran tradition. When Jerusalem

draws near, who can escape feeling a sense of awe at this most venerable of cities?

To say that Jerusalem is the fount of the Christian religion does not describe its greatness adequately. Although a good deal of Christ's teachings and miracles took place without, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, which represent the core of that religion, both happened in Jerusalem. The martyrdom of Jesus being admittedly one of history's major turning points, this itself is sufficient to establish the greatness of Jerusalem in the story of mankind. Because this land is as holy today to all the Christian sects as it was in those days, new churches and monasteries and seminaries keep springing up, to which the believers come in search of grace.

It is likewise with the Jews. Their great site of pilgrimage is the venerable temple built by King Solomon and destroyed and rebuilt time after time. Their history, their faith, their very future is bound up with this land. Solomon built his temple around the very stone on which Abraham placed his son Isaac for sacrifice to Jehovah. The Jews believed that their exile would end only when that site was reoccupied. But on that very site stands the mosque that the Moslems hold most sacred, second only to Mecca and Medina. It was in the seventh century that the Khalif Omar seized Jerusalem and this land holy to Christian and Hebrew alike has now been under Moslem domination for 1,300 years. How many times have the Christians not striven in these years to oust the Moslems and regain the land! The Crusades themselves continued unabated for two centuries. But the united efforts of all the Christian nations of Europe and the expenditure of blood and treasure on an untold scale failed to secure the objective.

The last attempt to capture Jerusalem was made by the Jews. In the 1948 war the Zionists prevailed over the Arabs and set up their State of Israel but, perhaps due to divine intercession, their main pilgrim centres still remain in Moslem hands. Today (1962) Jerusalem is divided into two. The new city with its huge buildings and hotels and shops lies in the Jewish zone while the holy places, especially the old city where the sacred

sites of Jewish history are situated, were seized by King Abdallah of Jordan. Thus the city of Christ who lived and died to propagate the ideal of peace among men has been converted into a permanent battlefield.

The signs of war were visible even at the approaches. The sight of armed soldiers guarding streets and the ever-present barbed wire marking off enemy occupied zones served to remind us that war was close at hand. We stayed in the Arab zone which lacked the modern hotel accommodation of the Zionist section but the hotelier did his best to make us comfortable; so we had no regrets.

Even before we had finished lunch, the District Commissioner and the police authorities came to welcome us and to show us round. They advised us to see the great Mosque of Omar and the Holy Sepulchre before evening and so we went out with them.

The old city of Jerusalem occupies about 160 acres and is surrounded by a stone wall, with gates of entry. It is said to have been built by the Hebrew King Herod. While the roads outside the wall are comparatively broad and cement surfaced, those within are narrow and steep. Since the old city itself spreads over two hilltops, its streets mainly comprise flights of steps.

The site of the Dome of the Rock, called also the Mosque of Omar is quite different. It is a level expanse nearly one fifth of the entire city in area, whose spaciousness astonishes the visitor.

Of the world's architectural wonders (like the Taj, the Temple of Heaven in China, Angkor Wat) the Dome of the Rock is also one and its beauty is second to none. It was built under the early Khalifates and the finest sculptors and craftsmen of many countries are supposed to have laboured on it. During the occupation of the Crusaders it was converted into a church but not long afterwards the Emperor Saladin expelled the Europeans from Palestine and re-established Moslem control and the structure reverted to its original use as a mosque.

The sacrificial altar sacred to the Jews is in the centre of this mosque. The sacrificial blood falling on it is drained by a hole

into an underground vault which is a holy place because prophets from Abraham to Muhammed are supposed to have prayed there. The Moslems believe that when the Prophet stood up after his prayer, his head struck the rock and there is a depression to mark the place. The maulvi who accompanied us pointed it out to me.

To one side of the mosque is the Tower of Antonius which contains Pilate's Judgment Hall. A part of the surrounding wall is the famous Wailing Wall where the Jews come every Friday to lament the loss of Zion. Not far from there and within the mosque courtyard is a tomb that is memorable to Indians, where Maulana Mohammed Ali is buried. He was perhaps the one man responsible for the awakening of Indian Moslems and after his death in England, his body was brought to Jerusalem for burial.

What can one say of the churches of Jerusalem? One astonishing sight to me was that of a Moslem official with drawn sword guarding the entrance to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It was his duty to keep the peace between the Christian sects, all of whom—Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Armenian, Coptic, Antiochian, Protestant—wanted to stand and pray there. In the limited space, the claimants had jostled for standing room until it was measured out and allotted. If I remember right, the Greek Orthodox now have the maximum space, and the Catholics next. To prevent fights the Moslem doorkeeper was appointed to stand guard at the entrance.

We walked round all the important places in the old city. We went to Bethlehem to see the Church of the Nativity, the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, the Via Dolorosa and other sacred shrines, where the atmosphere has its own mystique and the visitor ceases to be a tourist or historian and also becomes a pilgrim. The various Christian sects have their Patriarchs and Bishops in Jerusalem and during my short stay I was able to meet some of them.

Since Roman Catholic and Protestant dignitaries were everywhere, I used this opportunity to meet the Patriarch of the Armenian Church who was permanently located there.

I felt that acquaintance with him would be useful for learning many things. I wished to find out the condition of the Armenians in Turkey and Russia and what freedom they enjoyed. I made a formal call which he returned the next day with great pomp. Evidently an exchange of civilities with an ambassador was an event!

I received him with due respect and talked about the ancient ties between Armenia and India. I mentioned that in the city of Madras there is even a street named after them, which would indicate their connexion with our country. The Patriarch returned the compliment by stating that there were references to India in their oldest records, which went to show the respect Armenians had for India. Later, when I broached the subject of the Armenian Church's position in Russia and Turkey, the prelate's expression changed at the very mention of the latter, and in impassioned tones he said: 'The Turks are cruel and uncivilized. You cannot imagine how difficult it is for others even to exist honourably in their country. There is nothing in history to parallel the suffering of our people at their hands in the past five hundred years.' I had read about the Armenian massacres in the time of Sultan Abdul Hamid but thought all that was now old hat. But the Patriarch thought that compared to the present, Abdul Hamid's days were an improvement. In those days, there was a pogrom once in seven or eight years but in between the Armenians were not singled out for harassment. But today, though there were no massacres, the day-to-day treatment of the Armenians was intolerable. When I turned to Russia, he said without hesitation: 'There we have a State of our own and a government. The Armenian republic is one of the principal States of Russia. Besides, we have adequate representation in the central government, in the party and in the army. You are no doubt aware that the First Deputy Prime Minister, Mikoyan, is an Armenian.' 'Yes, I know that Armenians have a strong position in Russia, but what about the priests? How is your Church treated?' I asked. 'There are many misconceptions about the place of the Church. It is true that the communists are atheists, but they don't inter-

fere in religious matters. They leave the affairs of the Church to the Church.'

This was the first time I heard such a statement from a person occupying a high position in the Church and at first it did surprise me, although subsequent reflection persuaded me that he could be right. Whatever the Russians felt about religion or the religious establishment, there is no doubt that they were careful about preserving the various Russian nationalities. In Soviet Russia, there are many nationalities like the Ukrainians, the Georgians, the Cossacks and so on. The Soviet policy was to preserve the distinctive features of all these. If therefore they tolerated the Armenians also as a special national minority with a State of their own, it would certainly be logical. Since the Armenians had a special Church of their own, that Church would also benefit by the protection given to their nationality. I was glad to learn at first hand about this from the prelate.

After leaving Jerusalem we went direct to Damascus, the capital of Syria. Damascus is one of the world's oldest cities and was prominent even in Hebrew times. St Paul is reputed to have fled from that town and even now the house and the window through which he escaped are pointed out to tourists. However, the city attained pre-eminence under the Moslems when the early Caliphs, following Muhammed, made it their capital. It was from Damascus that they ruled their empire stretching from Spain to Afghanistan. Although that prestige has vanished and it is now the capital of a small country of five million people, Damascus is still a very attractive city. Among its oldest sights are the Mosque of Caliph Omar, the covered bazaars, the world's most ancient main street, 'the Street called Straight'. In recent times, Damascus has also acquired many of the modern buildings and other trappings of a metropolis.

Syria was at that time ruled by General Shishakly. The country's political history after its independence in 1946 can only be described as bizarre. The first democratic set-up was overthrown by the military who have been controlling the govern-

ment ever since, but the various Presidents of the State have been assassinated or forced to flee the country in the face of palace revolts. The root of the trouble was the rivalry between Egypt and Iraq for the leadership of the Pan-Arab movement. It is accepted in the Middle East that one or the other of these States will have to take the lead in establishing a Pan-Arab union, but in Syria there is no unanimity about which. Nearly half the populace favour joining Iraq in setting up the so-called 'Fertile Crescent', while another section advocates union with Egypt. Historical support can be adduced for both points of view. The result was that the stability of the regime and the very life of the President depended on the relative strength of the two groups from time to time. If a President leant too much to the side of Iraq, the pro-Egyptians would draw their guns against him. If he turned pro-Egyptian, the Iraq protagonists would take offence. Such was the hot seat of power that General Shishakly occupied.

After formally presenting my letter of appointment to the Syrian head of State, my first idea was to meet the head of the Jacobite Church, the Patriarch of Antioch. Apart from my official duty to meet religious heads, I had a special interest in meeting this prelate because a sizeable proportion of the Christians of Kerala belong to his Church. While they have been torn by dissensions for the past three or four generations, both factions acknowledge the apostolic supremacy of the Patriarch. The dispute is only about the extent of his authority over the Jacobite Church in Kerala. Nevertheless in view of his immense hold on the Christian community in Kerala, I decided that I should make his acquaintance.

While the original seat of the Church was in Antioch in Turkey, the present Patriarch had his palace and residence in the town of Homs in Syria, which is about eighty miles away from Damascus. However, a patriarchal representative lived in the capital and I had no difficulty in making the necessary arrangements for my trip. I was accompanied by my wife and daughter as well as an official called Kidwai. The road journey took not more than three hours and when we entered Homs

town, we were formally welcomed on behalf of the Patriarch. The Indian flag on our car must have helped them to pick us out and they ceremonially escorted us to the palace.

The palace and cathedral of the Patriarch disappointed me as neither impressive or elaborate enough for his status as the head of an apostolic church. Leave alone the Vatican or Canterbury, even the episcopal palaces and churches of Kerala seem to be bigger than the structures in Homs. Perhaps this may be due to his residing in a Moslem State. However, I comforted myself by remembering the great antiquity of the Church. We were received in the throne room. Although plainly furnished, the Patriarch's throne itself was embellished with two keys, symbolizing no doubt his title to the keys of St Peter.

The Patriarch who occupied the throne in 1952 was over sixty years of age. He was a linguist and profound theologian. He gave me nearly an hour and a half during which time we discussed many topics including the Church in Kerala. The chief impression I brought back with me was that he had no doubt at all that the British were responsible for the troubles that dogged his Church in Kerala. 'In the course of a hundred years, those sons of Satan have managed to divide this holy Church at least three times. May God destroy them.' I heard this imprecation three times during our conversation and ventured to ask, with due respect, whether an apostolic representative of God should damn a whole nation in this manner. He replied: 'The English! They are traitors to God. You do not know how they have injured this apostolic Church. The hand of God has now fallen on them. They will be destroyed.' In explaining the iniquities of the English, he struck one curious note. Whenever he wrote to the British government about the affairs of the Church, no Minister would reply direct and only some Deputy Secretary of the government would. According to his Beatitude, this was a calculated insult to the apostolic throne of Antioch. His exact words were: 'This throne was admittedly the first set up by St Peter. Even Rome came only afterwards. Thus while Antioch is even nobler than Rome, their failure to give the Patriarch of Antioch the same status

as the Pope is nothing but impudence. But God will call them to question, they are damned.'

The Patriarch was not happy with the Syrian government, either. 'The Sultans of Turkey used to respect the Church. Even though it was a Moslem State, they did not interfere with the Church. But what is one to say about these Arabs ? '

At this juncture, the Patriarch felt some suspicion and I observed him eyeing my secretary once or twice. He asked: 'What is your secretary's name ?' 'Kidwai', I replied.

'Kidwai, Kidwai', he repeated twice and then he continued his complaints against the Syrian government for their religious intolerance, but in a lower key and more moderate language. I could see that he was not quite sure about my secretary. He asked again: ' What is Mr Kidwai's first name ? ' Kidwai was shrewd and replied without hesitation: ' My own name is Virasat, Kidwai is my family name.'

There was a slight deception here. Virasat means one who believes in Arabia. It is a name common to both Moslems and Christians. Kidwai's full name was Virasat A. Ali—one who believes in Ali. If this were explained, of course, any one could see he was a Moslem. It was to avoid giving this away that Kidwai contented himself with the word 'Virasat'. Even then the Patriarch was not fully reassured. I therefore told him : 'Your Beatitude need not worry. I have full confidence in Mr Kidwai. He is a high official of the government of India.'

I do not know whether this satisfied him. After some more conversation, he opened his Treasury and showed us some of the precious crosses and icons that the Christians of Kerala had sent in tribute to the Church. There was a sumptuous dinner afterwards and we parted in great goodwill. Before our departure the Patriarch blessed all of us, including Kidwai, individually.

After ten or twelve months, I had occasion to call on him again. Our interview was almost like one between old friends. Since I was alone on that day, he talked to me at great length about the dispute in Kerala. The substance of his conversation was: ' If the Church in Kerala loses its link with this apostolic

throne, what is it but a small splinter group? The divinity of the Church derives from its succession to St Peter. I want neither authority nor their property. But it is difficult to sever that link.'

I made no comment beyond saying that as a Hindu, I was not competent to say anything about these matters, and all I could do was to convey his Beatitude's views to the authorities. When I was leaving, the Patriarch said: 'This Church sometimes awards insignias and medals. Would you object to receiving one?'

I told him with great respect: 'I have no doubt that it would be a high honour, but the Indian government has ruled that we should not accept any honours from other countries. Your Beatitude must excuse me.' With this exchange we parted.

My contacts with the Patriarch were of some help to me. A section of the Christians of Beirut and Cairo are followers of Antioch and they have their own bishops and priests in these cities. When they learned that the Indian ambassador was friendly with the Patriarch, their bishops became quite cordial towards us and I was able to learn a good deal from them.

From Damascus I proceeded to Lebanon. Although it is a tiny State, Lebanon's natural beauty is unique. The total population is a million and only Beirut is a town of any size. The whole State is perhaps as big as old Cochin State. Lebanon's distinction arises from two factors: one, its exceptional climate, and the other the traditional mercantile genius of the Lebanese. As regards climate, one doubts if there is any place in the world so fortunate. The mountains are very close to the sea and even in the height of summer, one can escape the heat in twenty minutes. Again, except for Kashmir, I doubt if there is any country where fruit grow in such profusion. The vegetation of Lebanon is especially appealing, while its timber, especially the celebrated cedars of Lebanon, is valuable.

The Lebanese have won a place in history for three reasons. It is said that their predecessors, the Phoenicians invented the alphabet and it is believed that they were instrumental in spreading it to other lands. Before the Phoenician alphabet, written

communication was by hieroglyphics. In China and Japan even now objects and ideas are represented by pictographs. The Harappan inscriptions show that in India also this system prevailed in prehistoric times. From the hieroglyphic script obtaining in Egypt, the Phoenicians are believed to have evolved their alphabet. If this belief is true, then they are certainly among mankind's greatest benefactors.

The second claim of the Phoenicians to a place in history is that they are the world's first colonizers. The ancient city of Carthage, long a rival to Rome, was established by them. They set up colonies in France and Spain and it is even supposed that the ancient tin mines of Cornwall were opened by the Phoenicians.

Their third achievement is as navigators and traders, in which fields they were unsurpassed in the ancient world. It is accepted that the civilization of Egypt was carried to other countries through the Phoenician traders. There was no place in the ancient world which they did not penetrate.

What a great contribution this small country has made to the world's civilization! Even today the qualities of the Lebanese are apparent. The Arab world owes its modernization in the past century to the Lebanese. Their skill in colonizing also persists. The trade in most of the new African States is in their hands. In South America, too, they have a considerable share in trade and industry in countries like Brazil. Although the Lebanese population is only about a million, it is estimated that another million Lebanese live overseas, engaged in trade and similar occupations.

The beauty of Lebanese women is legendary. The standard of physical appearance is the highest I have seen in any land. There are of course good-looking women in every country and in every race. It is well-known that in Kashmir and the Kulu valley even the working-class women are remarkable for their beauty. It is the same in Lebanon, perhaps to a greater degree. Women in Lebanon certainly enjoy greater freedom and are better educated than in the other Arab countries.

Another curious feature of Lebanon is the fact that the

population consists of equal numbers of Christians and Moslems. True, both are Arabs and differ only in faith, but the rivalry between them is something like the Hindu-Moslem rivalry in India. The reason can be briefly stated. While the Lebanese Christians number only half a million and hence are only a tiny fraction in the wider Arab world, they are accused of seeking the patronage of the Christian Europeans to compensate for this. There is some substance in the charge. The Christian Lebanese certainly have a bigger share in overseas trade and industry of which the Moslem Lebanese are somewhat jealous. There is certainly a lack of harmony which is reflected in local politics. The Constitution decrees that the President should always be a Christian, while the Prime Minister should be a Moslem. In general, offices are equally shared between the two groups. While the division of power is thus on equal lines, there has been no consensus in recent times. If a count were made, it is likely that the Moslems would exceed the Christians, no doubt because the latter have emigrated in larger numbers.

Irrespective of statistics, the convention that Christians and Moslems should share power has been on the whole salutary. The Lebanese have managed to avoid serious clashes or antagonism. But there were signs of impending change when I visited Lebanon. The Americans who have considerable influence over the Christian section were persuading Lebanon to support them in international affairs. The Christians of Lebanon are traditionally pro-European and since the majority are Catholics, they have supported Rome for three or four centuries. In the last century, the Americans opened a famous College in Beirut and started wooing the Christians. The Beirut College (now known as the American University) is one of the finest educational institutions in West Asia. Most of today's Lebanese leaders were educated there. After Lebanon's escape from French tutelage, the Americans attempted to build up their influence in the country.

The Lebanese Moslems feared that American dominance would be advantageous to the Christians and hence advocated

neutrality in the Cold War. As this was the official policy of the Arab League, Lebanon had to toe the line. At the time of my visit to Beirut there was some tension over this subject. The President was Camille Chamoun, who was a Christian and married to a Scotswoman. His sympathies in the Cold War are not difficult to gauge.

Before becoming President, he was envoy to England. When I attended the U. N. General Assembly Session in 1947, Chamoun was also there as his country's delegate. We had met and come to know each other at the time. It was about the time of my appointment to Cairo that Chamoun became President. He received me cordially and in the course of our conversation he said: 'Lebanon's membership of the Arab League is advantageous to India, never forget that.' 'How is that?' I asked. 'Because this country has a Christian majority, as long as we are members of the Arab League, it cannot take up a wholly Moslem stance. However much Pakistan tries, the League will not be anti-Indian as long as we are in it', he replied.

On thinking it over, I felt that this was not a hollow statement, but was basically correct. As long as the Christians had a voice in Lebanese affairs, the Arab League could not ignore Lebanese views in this matter. Hitherto Indian policy on West Asia was based on our friendship with Egypt. Because the Egyptian nationalists of the Wafd Party were friendly with the Congress Party of India for a long time and because the Wafd also had many Christians within it, Egypt did not at any time show any partisanship towards Pakistan. But if at any time Egypt showed any bias, it seemed to me that Lebanese support would be useful to India.

My anxiety about Lebanon centred only on one point. It was a time when Indo-American relations were extremely brittle. America had not only concluded a military agreement with Pakistan, but was also engineering a Middle East Defence Organisation in which they hoped to rope in the Arabs and Iran. Such an alliance could only be inimical to India and my object while in Egypt was to block it. If the Americans were

able to enlist Lebanon in this group, it was evident that this would not draw Lebanon any closer to India. My apprehensions were however resolved by the Druze leader, Gamal Jumblat.

The Druzes were an important minority who exercised an influence beyond their numbers because of their close-knit organization and their warlike qualities. Their homeland, the Jebel Druze, was a mountain region straddling Syria and Lebanon so that the Druzes were divided between the two States and had a say in both. Although they were nominally Moslems, they did not worship at the mosque, nor did they inter-marry with other Moslems. Their own religious tenets were something of a mystery. The common people were ignorant of their nature and only the members of some of their ruling families were let into the secret.

The Druzes were a semi-feudal community governed by their own chiefs. One of these was the Jumblat family of Mouktara. Till twenty years ago, the head of the Mouktara Jumblats was a brilliant, domineering and shrewd widow who not only promoted the family fortunes but also increased its influence in Lebanese politics. The French who controlled Lebanon under Mandate till 1945 treated the Mother of Mouktar almost like a queen. Gamal was her only son and whether in the government or not, he always remained a power in Lebanese affairs. It was inevitable that I should call on him. I had another reason also to meet him. Jumblat was the disciple of a yogi named Krishna Menon[1] who lived in Trivandrum and every year Jumblat used to spend at least fifteen days in Trivandrum with his guru. Since Krishna Menon had been my own guru in my boyhood, I had another reason for making Jumblat's acquaintance.

Our interview was very friendly. Gamal was well disposed towards India and so I had no need to underline all my apprehensions. Jumblat did not hesitate to tell me that President Chamoun was an American admirer while his friend and advisor Charles Malik (then Lebanese representative at the U. N.) was an American agent. 'But don't worry. I agreed to

Chamoun's candidature only after he gave me a written undertaking that he will do nothing to prejudice Lebanese neutrality. When you come to Mouktara, I will show you his letter. I certainly will not permit the Lebanese entry into the Middle East Defence Organization or siding with America.' This was stated simply and without any arrogance.

And that was what did happen. Four or five years later, Charles Malik became Lebanon's Foreign Minister. Camile Chamoun tried, in violation of his undertaking, to take the country into the American camp. Gamal Jumblat and his Druze army descended from the mountains and joining hands with other Moslem leaders, deposed Chamoun.

Life in Beirut is delightful. This city on the Mediterranean coast is almost a European holiday resort. All the big hotels stand on the beach and everywhere there are facilities for bathing and water sport. Other Moslem States also considered Beirut a holiday resort and the oil millionaires of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait owned residences there. While the Egyptian aristocracy spent their holidays in Europe, the ordinary folk repaired to Lebanon.

33

Neguib and Nasser

After a week in Beirut, we hurried back to Cairo. There was reason for haste because conditions in Egypt were changing day by day. The military coup was turning into a political revolution. For some time after my arrival in Egypt, Ali Meher who had been minister under the King several times was still the Prime Minister. The military cabal were content with pulling wires from behind the scenes. Only the name of General Neguib, the Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, used to appear in the papers. But I realized quite early that he had no real power. Although there was a civilian cabinet, it was becoming clearer day by day that the power was really vested in the Revolutionary Council whose Chairman, Neguib, was only the titular head but real authority emanated from a younger man named Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser. The sequence was a military coup, followed by regency and then the introduction of a republican set-up with General Neguib as President. Not long afterwards, Neguib too was interned and Nasser assumed power directly.

We were not greatly concerned with any of these events for our only consideration was how they would affect India. The former ruling party, the Wafd, observed neutrality in the Indo-Pakistan dispute. For nearly two decades they used to co-operate with the Indian Congress. But it was rumoured that several of the new incumbents were members of the Moslem Brotherhood, which was fanatically partisan and advocated the unity of all Moslem countries. There was thus the risk of their siding with Pakistan and my very first task was to prevent this.

It seemed to me that the best method was to build up closer contacts with the members of the revolutionary council. Neguib

was always friendly towards me. While I had met Nasser, Saleh Salem, Amer Hakim and other prominent leaders, I did not know them intimately. However an opportunity soon arose.

At the time, Egypt was still under British tutelage. The British exercised a supra-national authority in three areas. The first was in regard to the Sudan; the second related to the British army of the Nile; the third was the Suez Canal, administered by outside interests. Until British authority in these areas was broken, Egypt's independence would be illusory, lacking substance. When Saleh Salem discussed this subject with me once, I suggested: 'It will be easier if you take up these three points one after the other. Tackle the easiest first; and until you win there, do not let on that you are bothered about the others.'

Salem then asked: 'Which of them do you think is the easiest?' 'Sudan, without a doubt,' I responded. 'How do you make that out? Such a large territory with so much investment. Surely they won't give up all this?' he asked. I promptly answered: 'They won't cede it to you, but they will certainly give it up.' When he pressed for an explanation, I said: 'The British will not concede Sudan as a part of Egypt, but they may agree to make it independent of you and themselves.'

The position of Sudan at the time needs explanation. Egypt had conquered Sudan and was controlling it, but when there was a revolt, British help was needed to quell it. After the revolt was scotched, the British did not hand over the administration to the Egyptians but proceeded to rule it themselves, nominally on behalf of Egypt. For sixty years, this *condominium* continued, with Egyptian sovereignty being formally recognized and the British Governor-General of the Sudan being formally appointed by the King of Egypt. It was on this basis that the Egyptians now claimed that the Sudan was theirs and the British should hand it over and quit.

The British were not the only stumbling block. Sixty years of British rule had, as was to be expected, nurtured a nationalist movement in the Sudan. Although one section of these favoured Egypt, the strongest section of the Nationalist Party

wanted the Sudan to be independent of both Egypt and Britain. The leader of this majority was Sir Abdul Rahman Mehdi, son of the Mehdi who defeated the British seventy years ago to establish Sudanese independence. Mehdi was bitterly opposed to Egypt and, although a nationalist, he entertained friendly feelings towards the British. In this situation, to expect the British to hand over the Sudan to Egypt and quit was absurd, in my opinion. When I said as much, Saleh Salem was at first outraged. 'What! We surrender the Sudan? Never.' My response was: 'You don't have to surrender. The British will hand it over to the Sudanese and quit. If they find that you are inclined to obstruct, they will probably enter into a military alliance with independent Sudan before they leave.' He asked: 'What are you driving at?' I said: 'If you want to send the British out of Sudan, you should join hands with the Sudanese Nationalists. When you two come together, the British will have no leg to stand on.'

Salem was silent for a while and then he said: 'I will convey your suggestion to the Revolutionary Council. Let them decide.'

After a few days, General Neguib invited me for a talk. Among other matters, he remarked: 'The Revolutionary Council endorsed your suggestion regarding the Sudan. We are sending Saleh Salem for direct negotiations with the Sudanese leaders.' I replied: 'That is good. Once you two join hands, Britian wll have no *locus standi.* As it is, they can tell the Sudanese that since sovereignty vests with Egypt, they cannot quit the Sudan without Egypt coming in their place. They tell you that the people of Sudan are strongly nationalist and that they (the British) cannot disregard their human rights and hand them over to you as if they were mere cattle. That would be out of the question for a great country like Britain! But if you concede the claims of Sudanese nationalism in advance, you can checkmate the British.' Neguib agreed.

I learned subsequently that Egypt had started negotiations with the British on this basis. I was consulted at intervals either by Saleh Salem or his friend Sultan Hamid. His concern during

our meetings was with the negotiations then under way, neither of us mentioned it. However, my part in this a was not a closely guarded secret, as I soon discovered.

The British Ambassador, Sir Ralp Stevenson, and I were v good friends. One day he unexpectedly called me for t Almost as soon as we started talking he said: 'Why are y doing this when both our countries are members of the Co monwealth?' 'What is it that I am supposed to be doin I enquired. 'My information is that you are advising them these discussions regarding the Sudan. Is it proper for you th to work against Britain ?' he responded.

I knew that British intelligence was well entrenched in Cai but could not see how my conversations with Saleh Sale could have reached them. I asked again : 'What advice am giving them ?' Stevenson laughed. 'During these three wee Saleh Salem has called on you four times and Sultan Hami twice. I know this for certain. Do you suggest that they cam just to have a cup of tea ?' 'Certainly they came to talk to m But how do you assume that my advice to them was prejudi cial to Britain ? My only desire is to see that your negotiation result in a settlement that is just and satisfactory to the Suda nese. Do you imagine that I would ever do anything to damag Sudanese interests ?' 'I know the whole story', said Stevenson 'The claims of Sudan were our trump card. By making it th Egyptians' argument, you have completely disarmed us. Never mind, does Nehru know about this sleight of hand o yours?' 'I don't think you have any right to ask that question,' I replied. Supposing I ask you, 'Does Eden know that you are asking me these questions ?'

Stevenson had to be content with that. Before I left, he added: 'The treaty about the Sudan is nearly ready and as you wished, it grants full independence to the Sudan. But all its provisions will come into effect only after a general election and the Sudanese Parliament decides on the Egyptian connexion. Everything now depends on the general election. It should be free and fair. We should like a Committee to supervise the election and its Chairman should be a neutral person who is

wholly unexceptionable. Preferably an Indian. Could this be arranged?'

The first general elections in India had taken place not much earlier and it was considered remarkable that such an election had successfully been completed in a country of 350 million people. The elections were managed by a team led by an able official named Sukumar Sen. I promised to see if his services could be lent by India. Stevenson was quite pleased. He knew very well that a free election would yield a verdict equally adverse to Egypt and Britain. He was reconciled in advance to British withdrawal, but his reluctance was to entrusting the Sudan to the Egyptians. My last words were: 'I do not expect the Sudan to submit to Egypt. Will any one refuse complete independence? The Egyptians are also fully aware of this.'

The day the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations on the Sudan fructified, I received an unprecedented compliment. Five members of the Revolutionary Council came in deputation to my house to thank me for my help. As I was out, they left a letter of thanks before leaving. The same evening president Neguib rang me up and conveyed his own personal thanks.

Shortly afterwards Sukumar Sen was deputed to supervise the elections in Sudan. The results were what we had anticipated. The Sundanese opted for complete independence and in a few months both Egypt and Britain were out of their country.

The second bone of contention between Egypt and Britain was a tough one. During the war when the Italian army was threatening Egypt and the Suez, an agreement was concluded for stationing ten thousand British troops and their equipment in the Canal zone for security purposes. In war-time, this army of the Nile was actually in Cairo. After the war, they set up camp nine miles away, in between Cairo and the Canal. After the British withdrawal from India, this became the biggest overseas military establishment of Britain. The strength went up from ten to eighty thousand. One of the largest airfields in the world was constructed there, as also elaborate facilities for the repair of trucks, tanks and aircraft. In short, it was an

ever-present demonstration of British military power and in its shadow Egyptain independence could never flourish.

Once the Sudan question was out of the way, the Egyptians concentrated their attention on this problem. Stevenson expected India to stand by Britain at least here. Perhaps to make sure of this, he called on me one day. After the usual courtesies, he asked me in the course of our talk: 'You must have heard that we are now discussing the question of our military base. What are your views on this?' 'I have no instructions from our government on this matter,' I said. 'Still, what are your personal views?' he asked. 'How can I express any views without knowing all the facts?', I replied. 'One thing, however. If the proposals that emerge are not acceptable to the Egyptians, the government of India will certainly not think they are fair. Having objected to British troops on our soil, how can we argue that they should be quartered in Egypt, against the will of the Egyptians?' 'Really? Well, remember one thing. The presence of a strong British contingent here will help the security of India. The Suez Canal is vital to you too.' 'I can answer this argument myself. Your assumption is that India's security depends on British troops. I reject that suggestion. There is no need for you to keep a base in Egypt for our protection. As for the Canal, what is the harm to us if the Egyptians run it?' Stevenson did not relish my answer. But he replied good humouredly enough: 'I expected that your attitude would be favourable to the Egyptians. Now I am sure.' 'Let me ask you one question,' I responded. 'If instead of quitting India, Britain had insisted on retaining a military base there, do you imagine our countries would have remained such friends?' 'One can say no.' 'Then why not wind up this base which they consider is prejudicial to their independence and win their friendship?' 'Yes, I can follow your argument. But there are many factors involved. When we left India, our position in this area was weakened. If we leave Suez, it is not only Suez that goes. The whole question needs thorough analysis. No decision is possible otherwise.'

I had no part in the negotiations regarding the British military base. But I did intervene in one matter. When these negotiations were taken up, the British demanded that the American ambassador should also be a party, on the plea that the defence of the Middle East was now principally an American responsibility and hence any change in the military situation there would affect them. When I heard this, I knew it was a tactical move to secure American support for the British point of view. Although the American ambassador Cauffrey was an Irish Catholic who had no liking for the British, the decision on matters of this kind rested with Washington. If therefore the British and Americans played a joint hand, the Egyptians would be at a disadvantage.

I called on General Neguib and explained all this to him, advising him against consenting to such an arrangement. 'What can I do? We have already agreed. I quite appreciate what you say,' he told me. The same day I arranged to meet Colonel Nasser, whom I knew only slightly until then. When I told him of my reading of the situation, I could see from his expression that he was embarrassed. After thinking it over, he said: 'We have somehow to get out of this commitment to let the Americans in on the talks. A way must be found.' I agreed this was so. Nasser suggested that he would ask General Neguib to announce that it was the decision of the full Revolutionary Council the next day. I observed: 'That is quite good, but it is not enough. The Americans will be affronted if they are first invited and then shut out.' 'That is true', said Nasser. 'I shall meet Cauffrey right now and set things right.' I said that was the thing to do. I also hinted that he should indicate to Cauffrey that it was not because Egypt did not have confidence in America that they took this attitude but because they did not want to involve America in this dispute, preferring to keep America in reserve as a possible mediator for the future. My point was taken by Nasser. Anyway, when the Anglo-Egyptian talks on the subject opened the next day, the Americans did not participate.

The talks dragged on for a long time. Meantime, Ralph Steven-

son went on leave and his successor was the son of Sir Maurice Hankey, for a long-time secretary to the Privy Council. Young Hankey was a staunch imperialist and an admirer of Churchill. He would not yield an inch. It was at this juncture that Jawaharlal Nehru spent three days in Cairo while returning from London.

This was a momentous event from every viewpoint. Nasser has stated in his memoirs that his own ideas took shape from his talks with Nehru and it was Nehru's long discussions with the Revolutionary Council that laid the basis for his social policy in future. Hence it seems proper to say something here about that visit. There is no doubt that meetings of statesmen in high positions are of great help in developing international friendship. I believed that foreigners who came to know people like Radhakrishnan and Nehru would come to understand and respect India more. For this reason I was anxious from the beginning to bring Nehru to Egypt so that the Egyptian leaders would get to know him. Nehru needed no persuasion. I had only to hint that a stopover at Cairo would be useful and would achieve several objects. He agreed to halt at Cairo on his return from the Commonwealth Conference at London. When I informed the Egyptian government they were extremely pleased.

In those days Cairo was one of the principal stops for the London-bound aircraft of Air India. On Nehru's outward journey to London President Neguib came to the airport to meet him. This was an unusual gesture. Normally, heads of state do not go to receive Prime Ministers, especially when the latter are merely passing by. Sometimes a presidential aide may be sent to greet the visitor as a matter of form, but nothing more. Moreover, the arrival of the plane was at midnight. My wife and I, with senior embassy officials, went to the airport in time. Five minutes before the plane arrived, General Neguib also arrived with his *entourage*. He was accompanied by two young children. Apparently they wanted to see Nehru, in spite of the lateness of the hour.

The meeting was very cordial. On his return journey, Nehru

spent three days in Cairo. Although he was a guest of the State, he spent a lot of his time in the embassy and most of his interviews with prominent people were held at my residence. Nehru's visit was notable in this way. General Neguib and the Revolutionary Council took him in procession along the Nile for four or five hours. Spectators crowded both banks of the river. Dinner was also arranged on the steamer. The conversations during this journey were indeed of historic importance and Colonel Nasser has stated in his memoirs that Nehru's ideas helped to shape his own thoughts and policies. There were only the Revolutionary Council and myself present. The central theme was Mahatma Gandhi's contribution to Indian politics and the lessons his achievement had for others. Nehru's thesis was that no ruler could succeed if he did not identify himself with the people, and however good his policies and performance, he could achieve little without popular support. He illustrated this with many instances from Gandhiji's life. By the time this long conversation of four hours was over, we had returned to the pier. General Neguib and Nehru disembarked together, while Colonel Nasser was with me. I could see a new glow in his expression. I asked him: 'Well, Colonel, what do you think of Panditji's ideas?' I noted down Nasser's reply the same day. It was: 'The significance of what he told us will become clear only in time. But one thing is plain. We cannot hope to achieve much as a military government. Only a popular approach can bring results. From today I am with the people. Only the approach needs to be thought over.'

Which was what happened.

34

Friends and Visitors

Soon after Nehru's visit, I decided to take six weeks' leave and go to Europe. There were two reasons for this. I have already mentioned that while we were in Peking my wife fell seriously ill. In spite of consulting many eminent doctors, we were unable to find out the exact nature of her ailment. The many doctors we consulted in India also failed to give us a correct diagnosis. She did not enjoy good health during our stay in Egypt and I wanted therefore to get medical advice in London. Another reason was that although I used to make almost annual trips to Europe, my wife had not so far been able to visit those countries. Soon after Independence Day in August, therefore, we departed for Europe along with our daughter.

We first visited England. Our High Commissioner at the time was Balasaheb Kher. Although we did not know each other very well, he had made all arrangements for our stay and had also arranged through his medical adviser, Colonel Ahuja, to enter my wife in one of the main London hospitals for observation.

This was the Hospital for Tropical Diseases. The investigations took five or six days, after which there was no need for her to remain in hospital. We spent the rest of our stay going round and meeting old friends. Our host at the time was Madan Sinhji, the Maharaja of Cutch, who was then working as a minister in the High Commission. I have mentioned earlier that I was once able to render some service to his illustrious grandfather, Maharao Khemgarji. My friendship with the Cutch princely family was thus more than twenty-five years old. Madan Sinhji had taken a house and was living there with the Maharani and domestic staff. He therefore insisted on our staying with him in London, which we gladly did.

Guy Wint accompanied us on our tour of London. I almost recaptured my first raptures at seeing London. We also visited places like Cambridge and Oxford. Altogether our three weeks in London were very happy ones.

Apart from sight-seeing and medical treatment, we were able to do something else during this stay. The Arab-Israeli dispute was then at its height. Several public figures in the Israeli administration were known to me, especially the then Prime Minister Moshe Sharett. The Israeli ambassador to London, Elatt, was also an old friend. I thought of trying to find some way of ending this quarrel. But before starting any direct contacts, I wished to take counsel with one or two other friends. I first sounded Captain Liddell Hart, the well-known military expert, who was on close terms with the Israelis. I was fully aware that no solution could emerge without some concessions from the Israelis, and unless I knew their mind, there was no point in tackling the Arab side. Liddell Hart and I were both alive to the difficulties involved. We wanted to avoid any news leaking to the Press and accordingly we arranged for Elatt to meet me as if by accident on a Sunday while I was visiting Liddell Hart at his country house. Elatt had meantime telephoned Wint and expressed a desire to meet me.

Accordingly, my wife and I, with our daughter Radha, went to Hart's house at eleven the following Sunday. Hart is not only a military expert but the world's leading military historian. Till half-past-twelve, we were talking about historical matters and nothing was said about Arabs or Israel. Elatt and his wife came at half-past-twelve. As we were old friends, we spent the time till lunch talking about old times. During lunch the conversation was all about China. After lunch, the ladies went out into the garden and then we opened our own discussions.

As our discussions affect many matters of current controversy, it would be improper to describe them here. In brief, it seemed to me that there was a slight chance of successful mediation. This was how Liddell Hart also read the situation. I said that I would talk to Neguib and Nasser in Egypt about this

and we parted on that. How the initiative failed will be revealed later.

We then left England for the Continent. Three out of my six weeks leave were already over and we wished to cover France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland and Italy in the remaining days. Fortunately, we had many facilities for travel in these countries, where I had local friends. Our envoys in these countries had also invited us to stay with them. The ambassador to Belgium was P. A. Menon, son of former Dewan M. Krishnan Nair, a long-time friend of mine. He and his daughter had stayed with us in Cairo. Likewise, our ambassador to Holland, B. N. Chakravarti had been my counsellor at Nanking. Although he was away in London on official business, his wife wanted us to stay at least two days with them. We had similar hospitality in the other places also, especially Rome, where B. R. Sen was a close friend. Thus our three-week tour of the Continent was agreeably completed.

We returned to Cairo early in October. We found a rather confused picture with Neguib and Nasser already out of step. The elections supervised by Sukumar Sen in the Sudan were over and that country was on the way to independence, but its attitude towards Egypt was still uncertain. The negotiations regarding the British army base were not progressing. There was an atmosphere of stalemate. Unfortunately, as Indian ambassador, there was nothing I could do.

It was at this juncture that Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit came to Cairo as our guest. I have already mentioned how she had come to China during my stay there. In view of our friendship, I had pressed her to come to Cairo as our guest and it was in response to this that she paid us a visit, which had no political significance at all. She was a world celebrity and rightly so, because of her beauty, her intelligence and her grasp of affairs of state. But her personal qualities of friendliness, generosity and modesty also went to enhance her greatness. Her visit to Cairo was therefore a matter for gratification. We took the opportunity of taking her on a tour of other countries like Lebanon.

A squadron of the Indian navy called at Alexandria after naval exercises in the Mediterranean. As the Indian ambassador it was my duty to receive them at Alexandria and since such a visit by the Indian navy to Egypt was unprecedented, it occurred to me that I should invite the Egyptian President to see our ships. General Neguib accepted the invitation and came to Alexandria where he viewed our navy and presented the commanders with his portrait. The flagship was the cruiser *Delhi* which had gone to Beirut with the Admiral commanding the fleet. After the reception in Alexandria, we went to Lebanon. There also this first visit by an Indian naval squadron was the subject of friendly celebration. The reception we held on board ship was attended by prominent citizens of Beirut.

We returned to Egypt in the cruiser. Women are not allowed to travel in warships and any relaxation of this rule needed the special permission of the commander. The *Delhi* had broken this rule only once when Shrimati Indira Gandhi accompanied Prime Minister Nehru to Indonesia in it. My wife and daughter wanted to travel in it to Port Said. The Admiral did raise his eyebrows, but permission was obtained telegraphically and we did make the journey to Egypt.

November 1953 was a landmark in my life. The book, *Asia and Western Dominance*,[1] which I wrote in Peking after twenty-five years preparatory work was published that month in London. It created a flutter among historians and statesmen. The *Manchester Guardian* welcomed it in a highly appreciative leading article. *The Times* not only gave it a good review, but referred to it in a leading article. E. M. Forster, Dorothy Woodman and Woodrow Wyatt were among the many who reviewed it for British papers. There can be few later books on Asia without some reference to it.

I had sent a copy immediately on publication to Nehru. Within two weeks he had read it and sent me a laudatory note. But he did not stop with this. In his fortnightly letter to Chief Ministers and ambassadors he made a detailed reference to the book and its thesis. The book has gone through several

editions in Britain and America, and has also been translated into many European languages. There is no need to write more about it here.

In addition to its success in re-evaluating the influence of Europe on Asia and thus helping to correct a chapter of recent history, the book brought me personally two unexpected rewards. Firstly, Nehru appointed me a member of the States Reorganization Commission. This was an assignment of great responsibility, but I shall deal with it in another chapter. The second consequence was an invitation from UNESCO to join the select band of historians they had chosen to write a Scientific and Cultural History of Mankind. The sixth volume, running to about eight hundred pages, was to be written by three of us, my colleagues being Caroline Ware of the U. S. A. and Jan Romein of Holland. Out of the eight scholars selected to write the book, I was the only Asian. Naturally, I felt honoured.

In December that year, the British Labour Party leader Aneurin Bevan and his wife came to Cairo at the invitation of the Egyptian government. Bevan was certainly a remarkable person. Born in poverty in a coal-mining district and himself a miner, he rose to the position of senior Minister of the Crown and in fact was a power to reckon with in British politics. In Britain he will always be remembered as the architect of the National Health Service in England. A protagonist of India's independence, he supported India's case in the Attlee government. When under pressure from America, the British government increased its defence expenditure, Bevan resigned in protest. His wife Jennie Lee also occupied a prominent position in British life. Also from a mining family, she was elected to Parliament at a very early age. With her intelligence and eloquence, she was certainly an ideal life-partner for Bevan.

I knew that as an Opposition chief, he would not be invited to stay in the British Embassy, while with his characteristic independence, Bevan would refuse to be a government guest. Having known him for a long time, I invited both of them to

stay with us. Accordingly, the Bevans spent five days in Cairo and three days in Luxor with us. I made all the arrangements for his meeting Egyptian leaders, and introduced him to Nasser, Saleh Salem and other members of the Revolutionary Council at a dinner party. Their private discussions went on till midnight. In spite of all his eloquence, Nasser was not able to persuade Bevan of the validity of his military dictatorship. Bevan stood up and asked him: 'How long do you intend to retain such unrestrained power in your own hands?' Nasser replied: 'Until the corruption and inequity in Egypt are ended.' To which Bevan laughingly retorted: 'Which not even God has so far achieved.'

The meeting thus ended on a discordant note. The next day all of us went to Luxor which is the site of most of Egypt's archaeological wealth. It is in the Valley of Kings in Luxor that the tombs and temples of the ancient Pharaohs are situated, many of them reaching back two thousand years and antedating Christ. In those days Egypt enjoyed one of the world's most advanced civilizations. The Pharaohs were interred in full regal splendour and this was reflected in the contents of the tombs. The monuments of Luxor are among the world's wonders and we marvelled at them. While all the tombs and temples are of great interest, what amazed me most was the tomb of the Queen Hautshepsut, one of the world's most powerful women. I doubt if the world has seen an empress with such authority and competence. Elizabeth of England and Catherine of Russia are supposed to be the most successful women rulers of Europe, but Hautshepsut was not one but many steps ahead of them. Since she was the legal occupant of the throne, her husband Tutmos remained a mere consort during her lifetime. But when she died and Tutmos took up the reins of government, his military prowess and administrative skill made him a power to reckon with in the Middle East. The more remarkable then that as long as his wife lived, such a man was so subdued! Perhaps that itself is a measure of Hautshepsut's strength.

The first thing Tutmos did on coming to power was to do

everything he could to erase his wife's name from history and to make people forget her. Such was his suppressed animosity towards her. But all his efforts were vain and today the people think more highly of Hautshepsut than the conquering Tutmos. She did not shine in war but rather in the arts of peace. It was she who sent a trading mission to the land of Chung, now called Somaliland and imported several plants and trees from them for naturalization on Egyptian soil. The Egyptians first entered the Arabian Sea as navigators under her orders. I even suspect that their ships may have come as far as Kerala. On the tower housing her tomb, there are many pictures of plant life and I discovered some which are characteristic of Kerala but rare indeed in Africa.

Immediately after this excursion to Luxor, Bevan and his wife left for London. Soon afterwards, I received a letter from Nehru recalling me to India. Nehru wrote asking me if I was willing to serve as one of the three members of the proposed high-powered Commission he had decided to set up to study the complicated but long overdue reorganization of States. This was indeed a great honour but it was also an order. I welcomed the assignment, however difficult, because I took it as a compliment. I signified assent and prepared to return.

I had only seventeen months in Egypt, whereas it is customary to keep ambassadors in a station for at least three years. It may be asserted as a rule that no one can accomplish very much in less than three years. The question will then arise what I was able to do in less than half this time. I have no hesitation in answering that I achieved more than I had dared to hope. Nehru and the Ministry also shared this view. If I am asked to cite specific achievements, I venture to hazard the following. Before my posting to Cairo, Pakistan was generally more influential in the Arab countries. The Pakistani Foreign Minister, Zafrullah Khan, used to tour those countries frequently and mislead people about India. Beyond this, Pakistani propaganda took the line that India was an enemy of Islam and that Moslems were being oppressed in India, with the result that Arab governments were suspicious of and the Arab public antipathe-

tic to India. The first essential of my job was to remove the suspicion and antipathy and to create confidence and regard for India. Because I supported the Arab cause in their disputes with Britain at a time when Pakistan, a Moslem country, sided with the British, the Arabs became friendly with us. They also realized that Zafrullah Khan was a follower of Britain and Pakistan's policy one of supporting Britain. This was also of benefit to us. I was also able to persuade people like Radhakrishnan, Shrimati Vijayalakshmi and Nehru to visit Cairo. Their visits helped to build up friendships with Egyptian leaders as also with those of Lebanon and Syria. In short, I was able to turn the tide of Arab hostility and create a basis for lasting friendship with them.

In my seventeen months in Cairo I had the good fortune to win the friendship of some distinguished men of whom three deserve special mention, Abdul Rahman Azam Pasha, Professor Hamid Sultan and Taha Hussein Pasha. Of these, Azam Pasha was one of the fathers of Arab nationalism, while Hamid Sultan was a specialist in international law who used to represent Egypt regularly at the U. N. and other international institutions. Taha Hussein's status in the Arab world can be compared to that of Radhakrishnan in India and Bertrand Russell in England.

Azam Pasha was a national hero who challenged the might of the imperialist powers, Italy, France and Britain, in north Africa and received a sentence of death from each of them at one time or another. In 1912 when Italy clashed with Turkey, he espoused the Turkish cause and earned the death penalty from the Italians. In the 1914-18 war, he fought against the British and was again sentenced by them; likewise in Tunisia against the French! But when Egypt became free, Azam became a minister and was given the title of Pasha. Eventually he was appointed Secretary-General of the Arab League and got the opportunity of shaping the foreign policy of all the Arab States.

Azam was always interested in Indian affairs. In politics, he only thought of his people as Arabs and not as Moslems.

Since he had noticed Pakistan's affinity to the British he was inclined from the beginning to friendship with India. After we became acquainted, he was always very friendly. Perhaps our common interest in history may have helped. Besides, we had practically identical views on international affairs.

Although thus an eminent political figure, it cannot be said that Azam Pasha was as distinguished a man as Taha Hussein. Losing his eyesight through illness at the age of three, Taha in due course achieved international eminence as a scholar, philosopher and author. His early work, *The Debt of the Holy Quran to Arab Writings before the Prophet*, was reviled by the mullahs as irreligious, which shows how radical a thinker he was. Another famous work, *The Future of Egyptian Culture*, also had the good fortune of provoking the wrath of orthodoxy. Many of his literary works also command respect. As minister for education in the Wafd Ministry, it fell to Taha Hussein to reform the Egyptian educational system. There is no parallel in history to the scholarship or achievements of this man who became blind at the early age of three. I have always considered it a privilege to have secured his friendship.

Because of my frequent travels and the succession of visitors as well as the pressure of work, I did not get much time for writing during my stay in Egypt. The only notable production of this period was my English book, *In Two Chinas*, and a satiric poem in Malayalam entitled *Film Star*. Although my book on China was published only two years later, it was actually written while I was in Egypt. I also made some attempts to study the history of the Arab countries, especially Egypt and to study their early relations with India.

35

States Reorganization and the Birth of Kerala

I returned to India on 2 February 1954 to enter upon my new duties as a member of the States Reorganization Committee. Although I was aware of the tremendous responsibility involved, it was only when I talked to Nehru a couple of days after my return that I really understood how heavily he leaned upon the Commission. He said that our appointment was as a high-powered commission, that is to say, government was committed to implementing our unanimous recommendations. I also gathered from his remarks that the Commission would have complete independence and its three members would rank with Union ministers. The other members of the Commission were Syed Fazal Ali and Pandit H. N. Kunzru.

Fazal Ali was born in Banaras, but had lived from childhood in Bihar, where he became a Judge of the High Court and later Chief Justice before moving on to the Federal Court and ultimately becoming a Judge of the Supreme Court at the time of his retirement. He was Governor of Orissa at the time he was appointed member and Chairman of this Commission. After twenty-five years on the Bench, impartiality seemed to have seeped into his character. He was also endowed with tact, humility and the skill to reconcile apparently conflicting views. I need not say that he was wholly free from communal bias.

The second member was Hriday Nath Kunzru who was a Bhishma in Indian public life. The heir of Gokhale and Srinivasa Sastri, President of the Servants of India Society, a member of the Central Assembly in pre-Independence days and later a respected leader in Parliament, a tireless public worker who had served on numerous commissions as Member and

Chairman, a gentleman without party leanings—such was the tally of Kunzru's background and qualities. He was a man of disciplined habits who filled to the letter the Gita prescription of the balanced life. As is well-known, members of the Servants of India Society could not accept any remuneration beyond the prescribed maximum, any surplus going to the Society. In sum, he was a real *karma yogi*. I have often wondered how such a small and seemingly weak frame could contain so much energy and unbending determination. Like Fazal Ali, he also belonged to Uttar Pradesh.

P. C. Choudhary of the Ministry of Information was our secretary. A member of the Indian Civil Service, Choudhary was well read in history and Sanskrit. At my instance, another official, Hari Sharma, was appointed joint secretary. Sharma had worked in Patiala with me in the old days. Before Independence, we had worked together to bring the Indian States into the Union and this took him into the Ministry of States as deputy secretary.

The Commission was able to set up a small office quickly and start work. What did the government expect to achieve through it ? The popular impression was that we were to decide whether provinces were to be shaped on the basis of language and to recommend the necessary regrouping. Certainly this was one of our major terms of reference, but in addition we had two other important tasks. At that time, the provinces of the Indian Union were divided into three classes according to their degree of autonomy. The Part A States were the traditional British provinces of Madras, Bombay and the rest. The Part B States were either former Indian States singly (like Hyderabad and Mysore) or groups of these (like Travancore-Cochin, Madhya Bharat and Saurashtra). The Union government had certain special powers in regard to them and was also empowered to appoint some of their officials, including advisers, in order to improve their administrations. Certain other territories like Coorg, Ajmer and Tripura were classified as Part C States. Although these too had legislative bodies, their powers were nominal. Now it is obvious that without uniformity in the

provincial administration, our federal structure could never function efficiently. We had to consider this problem also and to make our recommendations. The third task was to suggest suitable administrative changes to strengthen the nation's unity after the reorganization of the States.

Actually the States Reorganization did not affect the North Indian provinces at all. Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Orissa were already constituted on a linguistic basis. There were only some trivial boundary adjustments to be made among them. It has to be observed here that the case of Punjab was rather special. Hindi and Punjabi were both spoken from one end of Punjab to the other, although in some localities the Punjabi-speakers were greater and in some fewer in number.

In reality this problem of linguistic States affected only the territory south of the Vindhyas. Some description of the background is indispensable at this stage. The Presidencies of Bombay and Madras were constituted by the British authorities bringing together territories under their control. In 1954 the Bombay Presidency for instance comprised Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka which were more or less distinct geographically in spite of some intermingling at their boundaries. In Maharashtra, excepting the city of Bombay, Gujarati speaking people were rare. Likewise in Gujarat, people speaking other languages were rare. Thus although the Presidency comprised three units, Maharashtra and Karnataka extended beyond. A sizeable chunk of Marathi-speaking people lived in the western part of Hyderabad known as Marathwada. Similarly the area known as Berar in Madhya Pradesh was the old Vidarbha of the Maharashtras. Consequently, if a unified Maharashtra State were to be set up, it was impossible to avoid breaking up the old Bombay, Hyderabad and Madhya Pradesh States.

The story of Karnataka was even more involved. The Kannadigas were spread over five States: the southern districts of Bombay, the Bidar region of Hyderabad, Mysore, Coorg and South Kanara in Madras. Fragmented over these five States, Kannada-speaking people had only one State wholly theirs,

namely, Mysore. The organization of a new State of Karnataka would thus affect all of five existing States. Although there were only minor border differences between the Andhras and the Tamils, if a Visalandhra State was to be set up, then there was no avoiding the inclusion of the Telengana area of Hyderabad State in it too. Turning to Kerala, there was the question of clubbing the Malabar district and Malayalam-speaking Kasergode with Kerala and at the same time of ceding Tamil-speaking Nanjanad and Shenkottah to the Tamil State.

The importance of this question was first realized by Mahatma Gandhi. When the Congress Party organization was revised in 1920 under Gandhiji's inspiration, the 'provinces' were formed on the basis of language. The Mahatma appreciated that you could not reach the masses except through their mother-tongues and that any freedom movement without popular support would be ineffective. Everyone agreed at that time that once freedom was won, provinces should be redrawn on a linguistic basis. But the linguistic 'provinces' of the Congress formed under Gandhiji's inspiration were significantly incomplete because the Congress had at that time excluded the Indian States from the purview of its operations. Consequently, the people speaking a language might be scattered over different States including some princely States. This is evident in the case of Kannada and Marathi. The Congress 'province' of Karnataka left out the nine million Kannadigas of Mysore and the population of Bidar in Hyderabad State. Similarly the Congress 'province' of Maharashtra excluded Marathwada in Hyderabad and Vidarbha. The anomaly about Kerala was equally glaring.

We spent the first two or three months in Delhi studying and discussing various aspects of this problem. As a result, one point emerged in stark relief. If this question was to be successfully resolved, Hyderabad State would cease to exist. Hyderabad was made up mainly of three language groups. The biggest group spoke Telugu and in certain districts the mother tongue was either Marathi or Kannada. Not only did the State have three language groups, these actually occupied more or

less distinct areas. It would be correct to say that the unity of Hyderabad really centred on the status of the Nizam.

On the other hand without separating these three strands of Hyderabad's population, any reorganization of the southern States was impossible. The Maharashtrians would never be content with a Maharashtra without Marathwada, nor the Andhras with an Andhra Pradesh lacking Telengana. Many of the principal shrines of the Veerasaiva cult who predominated in Karnataka fell in the Bidar region. Thus the continued existence of Hyderabad was a stumbling block to the broader aspirations of the Marathis, the Telugus and the Kannadigas.

Although it became evident that the partition of Hyderabad was inevitable for a linguistic reorganization of the southern States, there were certain serious difficulties. One was Prime Minister Nehru's own early pronouncements. Apparently he had said somewhere that Hyderabad was a pillar of our cultural unity and its continuance would be a standing memorial to our secular politics. The other was the sentiment of India's Moslems who looked on the Nizam and Hyderabad State as a symbol of their own past glory. If Hyderabad were divided into three, the Moslem colouring of that State would vanish as also the Nizam's own princely status. It was apprehended that such an outcome would create great heartburn among Moslems. Our own Chairman Fazal Ali was sufficiently impressed by these fears to desire the preservation of Hyderabad State in some form. I gathered this from the daily discussions that all three of us were holding.

After analyzing the problem thoroughly, we decided to visit the crucial areas in person and to talk to the State governments and popular representatives involved. We started on our tour at the end of May. Our first visit was to Kerala, where no serious difficulty cropped up, although for me it was a source of some personal embarrassment. The Malayalis lived in Travancore, Cochin, the district of Malabar and in the *taluk* of Kasergode. For many years, prominent Malayalis were pleading for the establishment of a united Kerala incorporating all of them. The Tamils never made any secret of their disinclination to

have Malabar district as a part of their State. Since the Andhras were quitting, they preferred to be rid of the small Malabar district too so that Tamilnad could be a homogeneous State. In these circumstances, the constitution of a Malayalam speaking State did not present any insuperable difficulty.

While this was the real position, certain pressure groups and private interests tried to cloud the issue. In the first place, many Travancoreans, especially the Nair aristocracy of Trivandrum, were bitterly opposed to ceding Nanjanad to the Tamils. The Travancore princely family came from Nanjanad and they had emotional ties with south Travancore and as long as the Maharajah continued in power, the Tamils of Nanjanad also did not press for separation. But even before independence, when representative government had came into being and the Tamils were seen to be only a minority there while within the Nanjanad region they constituted ninety per cent of the population, some among the Tamils were tempted to throw in their lot with Tamilnadu. When after independence, the Maharajah ceased to have any authority and Travancore was linked to Cochin, the people of Nanjanad actually broke with the State Congress and insisted on joining Tamilnadu. The clamour increased when the question of linguistic States came to the fore.

The Malayalis were mostly opposed to this idea, but their reasons were, to say the least, surprising. One 'argument' was that Parasurama created Kerala all the way from Gokarna to Kanyakumari and therefore Kanyakumari could never be given over to the Tamils. Another was that Parasurama or no Parasurama, Nagercoil and Kanyakumari were integral parts of Kerala. It goes without saying that neither of these arguments could hold water. History does not record that the area from Gokarna to Kasergode was ever part of Kerala. As for Kanyakumari, historically it has sometimes been under Kerala princes and sometimes under Tamil princes. But there has been no doubt that the *taluks* south of Neyyatinkara were inhabited by Tamil-speaking people. Therefore when States were being reorganized on the basis of language, there was no avoiding the inclusion of those areas in Tamilnadu.

No one could doubt that the local public was of this opinion. In the elections held after independence, the candidates who stood for joining Tamilnadu gained a clear majority. Although they were allied to the Congress in other matters, because of this reservation, they functioned as a separate group. Fazal Ali and Kunzru were at first generally inclined to let the entire area west of the Ghats remain in Kerala. But after observing the geographical features of the area, the village environment and the dress and habits of the people, they were also convinced that it was a Tamil area.

A good many people in Travancore thought that my conceding this point was a betrayal of Kerala. It seems they were arguing on the basis of property. How could any one cede any portion of Travancore to outsiders? I have never thought of myself as a Travancorean nor taken any special pride in being a subject of the Travancore Maharajah. I thought of myself only as a Keraleeya. Hence I could not consider it unjust to Kerala to give the people of Nanjanad the freedom to decide whether they wished to remain in Kerala or to join Tamilnadu. If language was the desideratum, then obviously that area formed part of Tamilnadu.

If Nanjanad and Shenkottah were to be carved out of Travancore and linked to Tamilnadu, should not one on the same reasoning cede Peermade and Devikulam to Tamilnadu? it may be asked. That was one argument of Tamilnadu. But I could not agree. While the larger number of the people then to be found in those two *taluks* were Tamil-speaking, they were not in reality local residents, but merely labourers who had migrated from Tamilnadu for work in the plantations. Since their family ties were still with Tamilnadu and they had not settled down locally I did not consider that their numbers were relevant. Accordingly, we recommended a Kerala State including Kasergode and excluding the Tamil-speaking *taluks*.

One word more about the birth of Kerala State. If many Travancoreans were opposed to the cession of Nanjanad, many prominent people of Malabar district were equally averse to joining Travancore! Their attitude was that there was some

virtue in hanging on to Madras. Apart from K. P. Kesava Menon and Damodara Menon, most of the leaders of Malabar were partial to Madras. The latter apprehended that in the Kerala set-up Travancoreans would predominate and Malabar would be at their mercy. Apparently, they thought that even being an appendix of Tamilnadu was preferable to this!

Meanwhile another influence started working against the idea of a united Kerala. There is no need to conceal the fact that this was in the person of V. K. Krishna Menon. Menon's view was that the whole of Kerala should merge with Madras to form a southern State. Only a short while earlier, at a Conference held at Trichur to plead for a united Kerala and in the presence of the Maharajah of Cochin, this eminent gentleman had argued for it. What can have brought about such a dramatic reversal? Anyhow, many Malayali leaders jumped to the conclusion that Krishna Menon was reflecting the views of Prime Minister Nehru and they also became partisans of a southern State. It is even said that a kinsman of Krishna Menon led a deputation to Delhi to argue this course before the Prime Minister!

Various forms of pressure were brought to bear on me. People argued that Prime Minister Nehru would never permit the proposed Kerala State and why should I sponsor it? The newspapers of Travancore continued mostly to revile me. I disregarded them because I knew that their grievance was baseless. I was also confident that whatever influence Krishna Menon used on Nehru, the latter would not despotically impose a southern province on the people. One can only congratulate these optimistic leaders on their powers of vision. It is evident that one cannot create a Dakshina Pradesh by merging Kerala with Tamilnadu without the consent of both parties. When a homogeneous Tamil State was within their grasp, would anyone believe that the Tamil leaders would throw it away as desired by some Malayali leaders in order to form a combined southern State! And yet some fondly believed this would happen. And all this was built on the illusory foundation of Krishna Menon's reported influence on Nehru.

If such a Dakshina Pradesh came into being, what would be its practical effect on Kerala? Not only would Nanjanad form a part of Tamilnadu, but Peermade and Devikulam would also be absorbed, counting the heads of the estate workers there. From this point of view, the Dakshina Pradesh even if formed would not last very long.

After our enquiries in Kerala and Madras, we spent nearly one month in Bangalore taking evidence on the Karnataka State. Afterwards, we spent a month in Hyderabad to observe at first hand the position there. It was there that we were able to convince Fazal Ali of the inevitability of a partition of that State. We had also the responsibility to enquire about cultural history and thus during our stay in Hyderabad we were able to visit the old capitals of the Satavahanas and Kakatiyas who occupy an important place in the history of the Deccan and to learn more about them. The capital of the Satavahanas was Pratistan. The land described by one of their kings, Hala, in his *Saptasati*[1] is situated here. This work has been rendered into Malayalam by poet Vallathol. Due to the neglect of the Nizam's government the temples and monuments of that capital were all in a sad state of decay. Only Ellora and Ajanta were being maintained properly.

I saw the famous Ajanta caves and the Kailasa temple of Ellora for the first time on this journey. I consider it my great good fortune to have seen these two places with every possible facility and thus be put in a position to appreciate their place in Indian history.

Perhaps I may relate here an amusing incident that occurred in Hyderabad. The Rajpramukh, the Nizam, decided to invite the three of us to tea. One morning while we were sitting in conference, our Secretary Shri Choudhary came and said: 'The Nizam's A. D. C. telephoned just now that all three of you should come to tea.' Fazal Ali promptly agreed and Choudhary made to go without ascertaining Kunzru's or my reacaction. When he was at the door I recalled him and said: 'As for myself, please make it clear that I will consider the invitation when it comes. Also add that I am not prepared to accept

an A. D. C.'s telephonic orders.' Kunzru responded: 'You are perfectly right, the invitation should have come in writing. But we will overlook it and accept it this time.' My reply was: 'The President of India and the Prime Minister have sent me similar invitations. Even then, after a telephonic enquiry, a letter in confirmation always follows. I am sorry I cannot concede the Nizam a higher status than either of them. But you are free to go.'

When Choudhary raised our objection on the telephone, the A. D. C. explained that the Nizam never sent out written invitations and High Commissioners, ambassadors and similar personages were usually invited by such telephone messages! When he heard this, Kunzru was also irritated and said: 'If it is not their practice to send a written invitation, please inform him that I too am not prepared to come.' He then turned to me and added: 'I never realized that these ex-monarchs are still so arrogant. Otherwise I would have given the same reply that you did.' Poor Fazal Ali was horrified at the thought of insulting the Nizam. He told Choudhary: 'You had better meet the Nizam's secretary and explain matters. It is enough if the secretary sends out written invitations under the Nizam's orders.' I agreed that this would suffice.

Within the hour Choudhary returned with the invitations. What followed was also a somewhat bizarre experience. We went to the Nizam's palace at half past four. Soon afterwards we were ushered into the presence of an old man wearing a shabby *achkan*[2] and pantaloons and a turkish cap on his head. Although the Nizam's parsimony was notorious, we were surprised by his attire. When we were formally introduced, he behaved as though he were hearing about Kunzru and me for the first time in his life. When told that Kunzru had been a Member of Parliament for many years and was President of the Servants of India Society, the Nizam said: 'Is that so? Servants of India Society, where is that?' I cannot believe that he was genuinely ignorant, the question seemed to me more a calculated insult. Similarly, when informed that I was a former Prime Minister of Bikaner and ambassador to China and

Egypt, the Nizam's face had the same expression of uncomprehending ignorance.

After our visit to Hyderabad, the shape of the future States became clearer to us. Once we had decided that South India had to be divided into four States, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh, the other elements fell into their place. Although Fazal Ali and Kunzru felt that there was the need only for border adjustments to the northern States, I pleaded for the bifurcation of Uttar Pradesh and argued that unless this was done, the problem of the States and of India's internal tranquillity could not be solved. The population of the United Provinces at that time was about 604 lakhs while the next largest State was Bihar with 450 lakhs. The remaining States were mostly between 200 and 300 lakhs, while Kerala, Assam and Orissa were even smaller. The disparity between the States was thus extreme. My point was that if the U. P. were bifurcated, there would be greater uniformity in the sizes of the States, failing which the excessive size and weightage of the U. P. would prove detrimental to the unity and integrity of the country. While there was a sizeable number in the U. P. itself who agreed with this reading, the then Chief Minister who was later Home Minister in the Union government, Govind Vallabh Pant, was very influential in the Party and was determined on a 'hands off U. P.' policy. The Congress executive and the government of India were expected to bow to his wishes. In this situation, my friends advised me that my arguing for a division of U. P. would be unpalatable to the Congress High Command and the Union cabinet and it might even prejudice my career. Perhaps they were right. However on a matter of such national importance, I was not prepared to suppress my convictions out of self-interest. When we completed our report, most of our recommendations were unanimous, but I added a minute of dissent arguing for the division of U. P., substantiating my point with many arguments and figures. I need not add that it did create a minor crisis.

For myself, it was an immense gain that the work of the Commission took me to every major region of India from

Assam to the Cape and engaged us in enquiries about these places. We visited remote areas like Nagaland and N. E. F. A. which people rarely see. I went alone, with our deputy secretary A. K. Roy, to the Laccadives. We went from Cochin in a naval frigate along with some officials. We got down at several islets between Minicoy and Amindivu Islands and enquired about conditions. The language of the Laccadives is Malayalam and the population, though Moslem, adopts the matriarchal system. A council of family chiefs administered justice. It is believed that the first mosque in India was built in the Laccadive Islands.

These islands are of coral origin. Minicoy is the largest but most of them are only two to three miles long and half a mile broad. There are two small adjoining islets of which one is State-owned while the other is privately owned. The only occupations of the people are fishing and growing coconuts, while many emigrants from these islands find employment as lascars in European ships. Their copra and fish were marketed in Calicut and rice and provisions imported in return. Although close to Kerala, I was doubtful if the Laccadives could be administered as a part of that State. Apart from everything else, their development would cost enormous sums of money. It seemed to me therefore that these islands, like the Andamans, were better administered by the Union government.

Thus we had visited every State in India and studied their problems at first hand before sitting down to write our report. Before that, however, we decided to take a month's recess. Kunzru had an engagement in Japan connected with the Inter-Parliamentary Board. I had received an invitation from UNESCO to attend an important meeting of the executive of their *History of Mankind* due to be held in Paris. As I have mentioned earlier, I was one of the three historians selected to write the last volume of that *History*. Fazal Ali was in poor health and he too welcomed the respite.

At the Paris conference, the three of us worked out a detailed scheme for the volume assigned to us, which was readily approved by the executive. We were to prepare and assemble

our material separately and to meet in April the following year, before starting the actual work of writing.

Back in India, the report of the States Reorganization Commission was finished in October. As its recommendations affected almost every Indian State, it is difficult today even to imagine what a commotion the report produced. Only Tamilnadu and Karnataka were on the whole happy. There was some complaint in Tamilnadu about the exclusion of Peermade and Devikulam but the general public took no notice. They were happy to be relieved of South Kanara and Malabar. The Kannadigas also felt likewise. While a few argued that at least one part of Kasergode should have gone to Mysore, their leaders, having regard to the size of the Malayalam-speaking population there, could not object to its inclusion in Kerala, although they tolerated the formal protests of some local bigwigs.

The question of the States Reorganization was bedevilled by contradictory and unreasonable claims. We only hoped to achieve a fair and reasonable solution that would be in keeping with the genius of our people. It was obvious that our recommendations would offend partisans. Nevertheless, the public in general commended most of our recommendations with the exception perhaps of Bombay. I was firmly of the opinion that a united Maharashtra should include the city of Bombay also. This was what ultimately happened. But both my colleagues differed. Without concealing my views, I subscribed to the majority decision when we signed the Report.

The partition of Hyderabad was welcomed by the Indian public in general and by most leaders except Nehru. In the end Nehru also agreed with this view. On seeing my minute calling for the bifurcation of the United Provinces a tirade was mounted against me at the instance of Govind Vallabh Pant! There was also a last minute frustration in store.

This was the sudden release by the Bengal Chief Minister, B. C. Roy, of a kite, proposing in place of linguistic States the combination of adjoining States into larger units based on economic and industrial factors and offering to bring Bengal

Historical Association's annual conference in Calcutta in December that year should also be taken as an honour.

That was also the year when I was invited to deliver the Convocation Address at the celebrated Visva-Bharati of Tagore. I had performed similar roles in Andhra, Delhi, Patna and other universities but when invited to this institution associated with Tagore, I confess I was a little flustered. In the end I decided to use the occasion to attack the escapism of those who would retreat from the temptations and responsibilities of life in an attempt to nourish the spirit. It was a refutation of the view of Vinobha Bhave and others that with self-knowledge would come the reduction of wants and that social progress would also result from this. My thesis was that whatever the foundations of Hindu thought, Hindu culture did not flourish in forests and *ashrams* but in palaces and cities and its goal was prosperity and plenty. True, people revered the anchorite who renounced everything but Hindu *dharma*[3] did not prescribe the householder a total rejection of *artha*[4] and *kama*.[5] A closer study would reveal that great figures like Sri Rama and Sri Krishna did not renounce the world but lived with their wealth and position.

My attack on the *ashrams* that retreated from life and from the people and the unreasoning worship of poverty as the prerequisite of spiritual progress did touch off a free-for-all. Many prominent newspapers joined the fray. Some people queried the propriety of delivering this speech at the location, Shantiniketan itself having been conceived by the poet as a retreat from the hurlyburly of the world. But little did they realize that all was not austerity in Shantiniketan and the poet's own residence there, Uttarayana, was really a mansion. As for the poet, he had demonstrated in his own life the harmonious blending of the spiritual life with the worldly life.

I went from Shantiniketan to preside over the Indian Historical Association Conference. It was a great pleasure to spend the next three or four days with historians from different parts of India. Although I had worked on a variety of aspects of Indian history from my youth and my written work on Indian and Asian history had received scholarly approval, all this had been

accomplished in the throes of non-academic activity. I could not therefore claim to be a professional historian. But this invitation seemed to me a kind of formal recognition by my fellow historians.

From Calcutta I went to Kerala where poet Vallathol and I had requested Nehru to inaugurate the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Kerala Kala Mandalam. Vallathol was particular that I should preside. The Jubilee was celebrated with eclat and immediately afterwards I had to return to Calcutta for the All-India Newspaper Editors Conference and other matters.

During these two years stay in India, I was able to do some writing in English and Malayalam. In English, my main works were *In Two Chinas*, being my official recollections, *Hindu Society at the Crossroads*,[6] and *The Geographical Factors in Indian History*. It is worth observing that in the last book, I had foreseen the possibility of a Chinese attack on India through Tibet. The book, *In Two Chinas*, was based on my personal knowledge of the Chinese Communist regime and the Korean War. It received more than ordinary attention and was translated into other languages also.

I also did some writing in Malayalam, the most notable being the long introduction to the poet Vallathol's translation of the *Rig Veda*. In 1954 the poet came to Delhi and stayed with me for a few days when he told me that he had completed a translation of the *Rig Veda Samhita* and wanted me to write a detailed introduction surveying the entire field of Vedic literature. While I had read the Vedas, Brahmanas and their commentaries, it was all in English translation and from a historian's viewpoint. I suggested that since Vedic literature had spiritual and religious significance to a section of Hindu scholars, it might be preferable to get such a scholar to write the introduction. Vallathol replied that although some *mantras* in the *Rig Veda* might have spiritual significance, no one has considered that the entire body of Vedic literature has any such status and hence it would be sufficient if I wrote a historical and literary survey. I agreed and started work but found the

task more difficult than I had anticipated. It had to be done while we were busy with the States Reorganization work. However, I did manage it and am gratified to think that the work met with the poet's approval. Incidentally, it also helped me to understand better one part of the background of Indian history.

Another job I completed was the translation of *Electra.* I had wished for a long time to translate the Greek tragedies into Malayalam. When I was reading a new English verse translation of Sophocles' *Electra*, I received a letter from poet Sankara Kurup soliciting a manuscript for the new press he had recently set up on behalf of the Sahitya Parishad. The translation of *Electra* was undertaken to meet his request and I sent it to him soon afterwards with a preface explaining the nature of Greek tragedy.

Only two original works were written by me during this time, the short poem *Amba Pali* and the novel on the Rani of Jhansi in autobiographical form. Preparations were afoot at the time to celebrate the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha and as a lifelong admirer of Gautama, I wished to offer my own tribute on this occasion by way of this poem. The novel based on the life of the Rani of Jhansi was also similarly occasioned having regard to the centenary of the 1857 Mutiny and the subsequent War of Independence in which Rani Lakshmi Bai played a historic part. The use of the autobiographical technique in this novel was an experiment. Although it is not uncommon to find such novels in French or English, no one had yet applied this technique to historical personages in Malayalam. I completed this work also during my stint with the Commission.

After submitting the Commission's report, we were asked to extend our work for another three months in an advisory capacity. By March even these duties were over and then the Prime Minister asked me what I would like to do. 'Isn't it better for you to go back to the diplomatic service? Where would you like to go next?' he asked. I told him: 'Having done China and Egypt, I should now like to go to Paris. But first I should like a six month's vacation because I have some important work to get through at Oxford.'

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Europe

I have already mentioned that I was one of the three to whom the final volume of the UNESCO *History of Mankind* had been assigned. Nehru was aware of this assignment. It was not a job to be lightly undertaken. Each volume ran to some 800 pages and had to get the approval of a panel of the world's most eminent historians. Moreover, because of its simultaneous publication in five languages by UNESCO it was certain to have a world-wide circulation. Having rashly perhaps committed myself to such a responsibility, I thought it my duty to do my best and to devote the next six months entirely to this work. When I explained this to Nehru, he concurred. He said: 'This will suit us. Mallick who is now in Paris wants to stay on till October. It will therefore be good if you can join at the end of that month.' I was only too happy to do so.

The UNESCO history committee met in Paris in the first week of April. After attending this meeting and helping to finalize the scheme of the whole work, the three authors of the final volume were scheduled to work jointly for one month in Amsterdam. Amsterdam was chosen for our preliminary work because our colleague Jan Romein was head of the history department of the university there. Since it was Easter vacation we were able to make use of the university facilities without any distractions. Holland is very cold in April and when we were there the ice on the canals had not yet thawed. A chill wind would blow across the lowlands.

Caroline Ware and I stayed at an hotel in the centre of Amsterdam. My daily routine was soon established. I would finish breakfast by eight and have about one hour for my personal work. I was actually rendering Sophocles' *Oedipus* into Malayalam at about this time and also writing a

preface to the book, *Citizen and the State*[1], a collection of my convocation addresses. At nine, Mrs Ware and I would leave for the university. From quarter past, all three of us would work for a spell of four hours without break. Our work was a thorough review of the events of the half century allotted to us (1905 to 1955), political, social, cultural and scientific. Because we were all three non-scientists, it was decided that we would only do a general conspectus of scientific development, and a detailed chapter would be commissioned from a scientist to be named by Julian Huxley. In the other three fields, we used to prepare synopses which we would read out to each other. After argument and discussion, these would be put together to form chapter outlines. We were thus able to hammer out the outlines for twenty chapters making up the three parts of our volume. We decided that the chapter on science should be dovetailed into this narrative.

In about one month we were able to decide on the shape and content of the volume in this way. Next came the question of the actual writing. There is no precedent for a book of this kind being written by three people jointly. All of us had equal responsibility for the whole book and there was no division of labour by topic, so that one could deal with the political portion and another the cultural. We decided that except for the material on science, the portions written by each one of us should be sent to the other two who were free to rewrite them. Afterwards, we were to sit together to make the final version. This called for strenuous effort indeed, but I left for England resolved to do my best.

I stayed in London for a week as the guest of Shrimati Vijayalakshmi Pandit, then High Commissioner, before leaving for Oxford. The interlude in London was not a holiday. There was a financial reason for this. Living in England had become expensive and for my projected stay of about four months, a sum in the region of one thousand pounds was needed. Under the exchange control rules in India, the maximum sum I was permitted to keep in London was only five hundred pounds. I was therefore compelled to augment my resources by work for

the B. B. C., journalism and the like. I had to arrange all this before going up to Oxford.

The authorities in Christ Church, my old college, were very kind to me. I was accomodated in the college guest house and my meals were taken at the High Table. My days soon fell into the academic pattern—breakfast with the dons, then work till lunch-time, either writing or collecting material. After lunch I used to glance through new books in the libraries or call on academic friends for discussion. From five to seven I would again return to work. Dinner was invariably at the High Table. Afterwards I used to linger in the Senior Common Room with the professors till half past ten. Fortunately I had a number of friends like Guy Wint, Geoffrey Hudson and Sir Isaiah Berlin, with the result that my stay in Oxford was indeed happy. Apart from my writing, I gave some lectures at the instance of the university and used to run up to London occasionally to broadcast. Within about two and a half months, the draft of the chapters I had undertaken to write was ready.

One incident during my stay at Oxford needs mention. That year the university awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Civil Law to former U. S. President, Harry Truman. Christ Church entertains such distinguished guests to dinner after the ceremony and accordingly Truman dined at the High Table in Christ Church that night. Truman was a President with exceptionally human qualities. He was President at the time of the Korean War and in his *Memoirs* where he deals with that War there is a paragraph in which he was very critical about me. Lord Cherwell in introducing me mentioned that I was the Indian ambassador to China during the Korean War and that the reports about China's intentions were sent by me. Truman sat near me during dinner and I noticed he looked at me more than once. After dinner and after talking to many people he approached me and asked: 'So you were in China during the Korean War?'

'Yes.'

'I now remember, I was a little hard on you in my book, wasn't I? Think nothing of it. One doesn't always have all the

facts in these matters.' Which I thought was very nice of him. Pandit Nehru came to London at this time for the Commonwealth Conference and I moved from Oxford to London. The *Manchester Guardian* had asked for two articles to be published on this occasion. They were to parallel two articles which Australian Prime Minister Menzies was to write in the *Times* which were expected to reflect the views of the white members of the Commonwealth. Mine were expected to speak for India, Pakistan and Ceylon. When my articles came out, I received letters from several public figures in Britain. There was also some correspondence in the newspapers about them.

I attended the Guildhall banquet held in connection with the Commonwealth Conference and on 5 July I went to Warsaw at the invitation of the Polish government. I had also agreed to deliver some lectures. My real purpose was to find out what changes had occurred in the Communist set-up as a result of the Poznan riots. I also wanted to visit East Germany. During my two weeks in Poland, I was able to study something of their educational system, their industrial organization and their courts. My lectures were in English, but there was a sizeable attendance.

I was also able to travel in Poland and get an idea of their strong cultural tradition. However, two things stand out in memory from this visit. One is the calculated destruction of Warsaw by the retreating German armies and the way the Poles rebuilt the city afterwards. Warsaw is an old and beautiful city. The Germans proceeded to destroy it street by street and even house by house. They nearly completed their task of vandalism for which there is no parallel in history except Rome's destruction of Carthage and the Moslem devastation of Vijayanagar. History is replete with instances of wanton destruction. The British set fire to the Summer Palace at Peking. Nadir Shah put thousands to the sword in Delhi. Timur is said to have killed his war prisoners and piled up their bones. Some Moslem rulers have despoiled temples in India. But the Nazi action in Warsaw surpassed all these in sheer unmitigated vandalism. But today what amazes one is

not so much the savagery of the Nazis but the grim resolve of the Poles in rebuilding the city, stone by stone, in the same architectural style and to the same standard of beauty. This reconstruction has to be seen to be believed.

The second unforgettable experience is seeing the concentration camp at Auschwitz where the Nazis in the most diabolical manner exterminated Jews and those suspected of Jewish descent. Today the camp is preserved as a museum, which is visited by many every day. The number of innocents massacred there runs to hundreds of thousands. The Nazis used in the most callous fashion to collect their hair and skin and bones for re-use! This revelation of the depravity of men was shocking to me. One hears that many of the people who indulged in these fiendish exercises were otherwise cultivated men! The German ambassador to India, Katz Zucky, told me once that one of these monsters was a skilled musician and poet, who used to spend his evenings reading poetry!

The sight of this murder factory moved me also for another reason. I knew that several people whom I had known personally had met their end there but it was the thought of that remarkable lady Gertrude Zeits that gave me a sense of special loss. She was the wife of Hermann Zeits, a famous playwright and one time assistant editor of the *Berliner Zeitung*. I had known this beautiful and cultivated woman and her husband from 1926 and I had been their guest in Berlin more than once. Apparently one of Gertrude's grandmothers was a Jewess! Immediately on Hitler's coming to power, Zeits and his wife therefore moved from Berlin to Vienna. When Hitler subsequently annexed Vienna, they had no place to go. During the war, she was taken away on the pretext of transfer and brought to the gas chamber in this concentration camp.

I visited some factories run by the communists in Warsaw. Their coal mines and steel plants were no different from those in capitalist countries! Of all their new enterprises the one that attracted me most was a beautiful holiday home and garden which they had constructed for poets and literary workers. One could relax completely in that place, free from the bustle

of life. At the time of my visit there were nearly fifty people residing there including some women and I spent a pleasant afternoon in literary discussions with them.

I was taken for three days to a holiday resort on the Carpathian Mountains, but as the main recreation there was mountaineering which has never appealed to me, I had to spend most of my time indoors. To help pass the time, I took up my translation of Sophocles' *Oedipus* and almost completed it.

From Poland I went to East Germany, already a communist State. I visited several centres and was struck by the industrial development. I was able to meet the President and other high dignitaries. But because of the division of Germany, I felt there was something artificial about the whole country. My next stop was Bonn, capital of the Federal German government.

The Indian ambassador in Bonn at that time was my old friend Kandoth Narayanan Nambiar. He was living in Germany from 1923. His experiences read like a novel. He married Suhasini, sister of Sarojini Naidu, and they went to Germany together for studies. In Germany Suhasini became a communist under the influence of her brother Virendranath Chattopadhyaya. As I remember it, Nambiar did not join the party, although he was close to left circles. He was the mid-European correspondent for newspapers like *The Hindu* even then, as I found on my first visit to Germany in 1926. Gradually he made a name among intellectuals. The Nazis, who were anti-communist and racial fanatics involved Nambiar in the notorious Reichstag Fire Trial. The Nazis maintained that Dimitrov and other communists conspired to set fire to the Reichstag so as to discredit Germany in the eyes of the world. Nambiar himself told me that he was able to extricate himself only because of the intervention of the British authorities.

Nambiar thereupon moved to Vienna and later to Prague. It was during his Vienna days that he was able to render some service to the Nehru family who had brought Kamala Nehru to Vienna for medical treatment. Nambiar had rebuilt his life in Vienna when the Anschluss forced him once more to flee the Nazis and start afresh for a third time in Prague. But it

took only a few years for Hitler to overrun Czechoslovakia, when Nambiar once again escaped to Paris. With the fall of Paris on 1940, Nambiar had to walk to unoccupied France with nothing except the clothes he was wearing. Ultimately he found refuge in the *ashram* run in the south of France by Swami Sidheswarananda of the Ramakrishna Order. The Swamiji was the son of a Cochin prince and a devout and scholarly person with a large spiritual following in France. He too had shifted his *ashram* to the south when war broke out. Nambiar lived there in disguise for some time, mercifully eluding the police until one day the emissaries of Subhas Bose tracked him down with an invitation to join their movement. How Nambiar, who was profoundly anti-Nazi and had suffered so much at the hands of the Nazis, came to make his peace with them is a puzzle. However that may be, he became a minister under Netaji and when Bose left by submarine for Singapore to found the I. N. A., Nambiar was left as his European representative with the status of an ambassador. But poor Nambiar had more trials in store. When Germany capitulated, the British army promptly interned Nambiar and he was released eventually with the help of Nehru.

After independence, Nehru drafted Nambiar into the diplomatic service, in which he served first as counsellor in Switzerland and later as minister in Sweden before ending up as ambassador to Germany. In every way, he was the right man for the right job. After thirty years stay in Germany, he had an intimate knowledge of the people, their language and history, with an extensive circle of friends and considerable influence at various levels. I have not seen any foreigner who knew German affairs as thoroughly as Nambiar did. Although well educated, he was modest, frugal and soft spoken. He certainly served India well in Germany.

Because I was staying with him in Bonn, I had no difficulty in meeting the President and the Foreign Minister. As Chancellor Adenauer was not in Bonn, much to my disappointment, I could not meet him. However, I greatly enjoyed my interview with the German President, Theodore Heuss, who was one of

their foremost historians. Our conversation was practically confined to Asian and Indian history. He himself told me that he had read the German translation of my book *Asia and Western Dominance* and we discussed some of the views I had expressed there. I confess I was flattered.

After returning from Germany, I did not tarry in London but came home to Delhi on 18 August 1956, ready to get back into harness and on to Paris.

37

Ambassador in Paris

Although the original programme was to send me out to Paris in October, the Prime Minister put this off to November for some reason. This was in a way convenient to me, for it enabled me to take my youngest daughter also with me. Her husband, K. C. Mohan, had recently been sent to Russia on service duty. I therefore made my arrangements for leaving by the end of November.

About this time, P. S. Rau, who was administering the State of Travancore-Cochin under President's rule, invited me to become the first President of the Kerala Sahitya Akademi, which was being formed on the lines of the central Sahitya Akademi. I knew Rau from my Oxford days and thought he was extending this invitation for personal reasons. Accordingly, I declined pointing out that I was due to leave for Paris very soon and would be away for at least three years, so that it would be better for him to select someone else. He then revealed that the appointment had been finalized when Panampilli Govinda Menon was Chief Minister, that he was merely implementing the decision, that my impending move to Paris was known to him but it need not affect my decision, since a suitable Vice-President could be appointed. I thereupon asked for the appointment of Shri K. P. Kesava Menon as the working President, which was agreed to.

I was somewhat surprised to see the names of the first members of the Akademi nominated by the government. People like Vadakumkoor Rajaraja Varma, R. Narayana Panikkar and Puthezhath Raman Menon were left out and instead there were some people who had little connection with literature except teaching Malayalam in colleges. When I raised this with Rau, he told me that the list was drawn up to give repre-

sentation to all communities and while he himself did not care for this policy, there was no help for it. On Vijayadasami Day[1] in 1956, the Akademi was formally inaugurated by the Rajpramukh, the Maharajah of Travancore. I presided over its first meeting and after helping to draw up a programme of work, I returned to Delhi.

We left for Paris at the end of November and I entered on my duties as ambassador on 2 December. Until the First World War, the London and Paris embassies were esteemed the top posts in the diplomatic world. Although this remained so for some more time, the status of Washington and Moscow rose and eventually Washington and Moscow came to have precedence over London and Paris. However, even now the Paris post is one of the plums in the service. Politically, the other three capitals may now loom larger, but even today Paris is the world's capital in the fine arts, especially literature, music, painting and sculpture. In this sphere Paris had precedence. I have already recorded my love of Paris in this book and once wrote a poem in its praise. Between 1925 and 1937 I used to visit Paris almost every year and in 1926 and 1927 I actually lived there. I still have a number of friends in that great city. It was therefore with immense satisfaction that I took up my assignment.

At that time, France had practically no ties with India. The French enclaves like Pondicherry had already been returned to India and only parliamentary ratification of the cession remained. My main duty was to arrange for purchase of heavy arms and military aircraft, which was done by specialists and needed only my formal supervision. In the field of commerce also, there was a specialist to attend to details. All told, my impression was that notwithstanding its prestige, the Paris embassy was a comparatively easy post.

The situation in France at the time was somewhat peculiar. Due to the fragmentation of political parties, the government had an uncertain majority and was weak. The Prime Minister Guy Mollet was the leader of the Socialists but his government rested on the support of the Radicals and the indifference

of the communists. Industry and trade had made a phenomenal recovery but politically the country was sick.

The reason was none other than the Algerian War. The extreme right was not prepared to give up Algeria at any cost. The army, always a power in French politics, supported the thesis that Algeria was not a colony but a part of metropolitan France and in fact the Generals were out to crucify any left-wing leader who advocated a liberal settlement with Algeria. Unfortunately there was no leader who could stand up to them.

Apart from the Algerian War, three other factors seemed to me to hold the key to the future of France. The first was the proposed European Economic Community made up of France, Germany and Italy with the Benelux countries. When and if the Community ever took shape, western Europe would match Russia and America in the councils of the world. But the initiative and leadership for such a Community had to come only from France and if France were to lead such a United Europe, the ancient hostility between France and Germany had to be overcome. This was the second key factor. France needed a leader who could seek a *détente* with Germany and thus assume the leadership of Europe. The third factor was a question mark, how the north African empire of France, which covered nearly one third of the land area of that Continent, could be fitted into the scheme of a united Europe? These three factors seemed to me to hold the key to France's future and the question was: who would be able to find that key.

As all ambassadors do, I proceeded to meet all the French leaders. Among them all, I credited only two men with potential for greatness—Pierre Mendes-France and Edgar Faure. Unfortunately, both of them lacked popular support and belonged to weak parties.

But there was one man, outside the political parties, trusted by the people and in fact revered by all except the politicians—de Gaulle. For eleven years, he had kept out of politics. The man who liberated France after her debacle in the war and restored his country to something like its former place among the Great Powers, lived in a village outside Paris like a deposed

king, writing his reminiscences. But everyone knew that he was keenly watching the situation. I decided to meet him also. When I mentioned this to Sir Gladwyn Jebb, the British ambassador, he laughed. 'De Gaulle is a monument. You should certainly see him. But don't think he will come back to power. After you see him, come and tell me if anything crops up.'

Soon afterwards I met de Gaulle at his office in Paris. I took with me the embassy counsellor Govardhan, who was a French-speaking Mauritian. I could understand French spoken by others and could read the language, but could not converse freely. But this was not why I took Govardhan with me. I considered the meeting of considerable importance and wanted to make sure that I understood de Gaulle perfectly and that my own ideas were conveyed to him precisely. In addition, I thought it would be useful to have someone with whom I could compare notes when we assessed our impressions.

De Gaulle was then sixty-seven years old. His tremendous height and his prominent nose were both out of proportion, but I could see in him an aura of nobility that could emanate only from a man of great honour and conviction. No blemish has been ascribed to his character at any time and even when he exercised supreme authority in his country, no one has charged him with any impropriety. He was a man dedicated solely to the good of France. We talked for nearly one hour and it seemed to me that his opinions had been formed out of long and serious reflection and could not now be altered by anyone. I felt certain about one thing. If France were to continue on the same road, she would soon face a crisis and then de Gaulle would come back to power. This is not a matter of hindsight, but what I wrote to the government of India at the time.

I was also able to take some considerable part in the activities of UNESCO during this period. To implement a proposal for greater cultural exchange between East and West a committee of representatives of major countries had been constituted of which I was elected chairman. The committee laboured for some six weeks and the work was very valuable.

Towards the end of the year, I planned a long tour of the

French African colonies. This was a journey without precedent, but the French government were extremely obliging and the Quai d'Orsay wrote to these countries to render assistance to my party. I was accompanied by my wife and Sunu Kapadia, a young Parsi woman who was then Third Secretary at the Embassy. Sunu had entered the Service by competitive examination and Paris was her first posting. I entrusted this intelligent and alert young woman with the duty of reporting on our visit.

These African countries and their peoples were like nothing else I had seen before. I was struck by four unique features. The people of these countries (of French Africa) did not have any language of their own, although as Moslems all of them had a smattering of Arabic. Within each community they spoke local dialects of the kind that many hill tribes use in India. The result was that over a huge expanse of land, including many races of pure African descent, even primary education was conducted in French. Be it noted that French was not merely the official language as we had English in India, but was the mother tongue. The second remarkable thing was the extreme cultural gap between the ordinary labouring classes and the educated people who were engaged either in government service or in commerce. True, these educated people were also black Africans and their social status was not very different from that of their unlettered compatriots, presumably because the change occurred within one generation, but the cultural difference was striking. A former Prime Minister of Fort Lammey who is a respected figure in any French circle told me that his father was a cannibal! He also indicated that some of his relations were even now in that stage of evolution.

The third feature was the extent of depopulation which, in spite of their vast physical area, condemned these States to dependence on France. The fourth point that struck me was the paradoxical fact that instead of drawing revenue from her colonies, France was pumping its own money into them. The administrative costs of these countries were borne in a large measure by the French government.

A scheme of partial self-government, something like the old Montague-Chelmsford reforms in India, had been recently put into effect in these colonies, so that although the governors and chief secretaries were Frenchmen, the ministers were Africans. But there was one significant difference between our dyarchy and this. Most of the African ministers were also members of the French Parliament and hence they did have some voice in metropolitan France when it came to determining African affairs.

Whether it was due to respect for India or because this was the first time an ambassador was visiting these countries, I was flattered to receive state honours everywhere. Cannon salute, guard of honour, civic address, official banquet—all these formalities were observed. At the end of my three-week tour I came back wondering how long this partial self-government would survive and how these tiny States—many had a population of only two or three million—could exist unaided in future? My doubts were to be answered in an unexpected fashion by events in the coming year.

The political situation in France was deteriorating rapidly. There was discontent in the army, public confidence in the government was low and in fact there were almost monthly changes of government, the police force was corrupt and unreliable, political murders took place in broad daylight—all these were portents of impending tragedy. France was not winning the war in Algeria. On the other hand, the army was guilty of atrocities against the local populace in defiance of government orders. No one knew what would happen, especially because the army was the strongest element on the national scene. In my report to Delhi at the end of April I observed that in my opinion de Gaulle would take over without much delay.

This was what happened. In May, de Gaulle manoeuvred himself into the position of a mediator between an army poised for revolt and a shaky government, persuaded Parliament to hand over power to him as the only alternative to military government or a revolution, and thus assumed control

of the destiny of France. No one could then imagine that he would gradually strip the generals of their vaunted power and that this supposed patron of imperial France would liberate all the African territories at one stroke and even negotiate a truce in Algeria.

Not long after his assuming power, de Gaulle invited me for conversation one day. He had not forgotten that I sought him out at a time when he was still in the wilderness. Until the time ten months later when I became ill and had to leave France we met several times. He was always very friendly to me. I should like to mention one interview in particular.

Shrimati Vijayalakshmi was High Commissioner in London at the time. I used to visit London frequently and stay as her guest and similarly she has been my guest wherever I was posted as ambassador. When she came to Paris as our guest, I wished to introduce her to de Gaulle. I called the President's secretary and spoke to him about it. Immediately we received invitations for myself, my wife and Shrimati Vijayalakshmi to lunch. Shrimati Vijayalakshmi and I were due at the Elysée Palace at half-past-eleven and my wife at half-past-twelve, which gave us nearly one hour for discussions. Later Mme de Gaulle and my wife joined us and it was half-past two when we left. It was a pleasant meeting indeed.

In the middle of October I went on a motoring holiday through Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia and Italy. My wife had not seen Germany and other countries, nor I Yugoslavia. I also had an unofficial invitation from Marshal Tito. We had friends all along the route and our journey was pleasant, with halts of three or four days at each centre. As Marshal Tito was on holiday at Brioni, we were invited there.

Brioni was something of a country estate, set apart from the mainland. Tito lived there in the style of our own Maharajahs in the past. There was no one else in the island. It was a park filled with exotic vegetation and imported fauna and birds. Brioni reminded me of the Bikaner Maharajah's retreat at Gajaner. In a palace in this island the communist leader lived

in regal splendour. He wore an expensive ring on his finger. Mme Tito was dressed in the latest Parisian fashion. My wife and I were surprised by this way of living and in fact my wife used to refer to him thereafter as Tito Maharajah.

The fare at his table was equally princely. There were five wines on offer. Before and after lunch we discussed international affairs at length. It was then that Tito's shrewdness and diplomatic skill were revealed. It was a treat to hear his analysis of the foreign policies of Russia, China and America. We left at half-past three and it was late when we reached Trieste. Our return journey took us through Venice and Milan back to Paris.

I was also doing a considerable amount of unofficial work in Paris. Since they were all prestigious activities, they complemented my duties as ambassador, so long as I could fit them in. Among them were my contacts with the University of Paris. The Sorbonne is one of the world's leading institutions and its influence extends not only to the world of education but also to the world of international politics. Not long after my arrival in Paris, I was invited to deliver a course of lectures. My subject was 'Cultural Contact Between India and the West'. The lectures were later published in French. The next year also I had a similar invitation and the subject in 1958 was the problems of newly independent States. The University authorities felt that this series was more than ordinarily successful particularly in view of their large audience. The lectures were subsequently published in English and French under the title *The Problems of New States.* The book achieved considerable circulation and was translated into other languages too. I was also invited to lecture in Switzerland, Germany and England. Wherever I could go without prejudice to my official duties, I made it a practice to go.

My literary work did not lag behind. Among my writings of this period are my contributions on Asian history to a German encyclopedia, a life of Buddha (unpublished), a book entitled *Common Sense about India* and a long introduction to Vatsyayana. I wrote only one piece in Malayalam, a translation of *King Lear* for the Akademi.

While in Paris, I also had a private life unconnected with my duties. I had some very old friends among the French and I knew also some Indian and Ceylonese ladies who had married into French families. Two of them deserve special mention. One is Krishna Riboud, a grand niece of Tagore who was educated in America and married a Frenchman named Jean Riboud. Riboud was rich, cultivated and influential. Krishna, although married to a French citizen, never forgot her Indian background and always remained a Hindu woman. She used to take a leading part in everything connected with India. Once every year she used to take her husband to India to meet her mother and family. We were very close friends.

Rather a different personality was Anil DeSilva. Anil was Ceylonese but grew up in India. I haven't met any woman who knows as much about Indian painting as she does. She had married a French scientist named Vigier who had an international reputation in the field of cancer research and was also a prominent member of the Communist Party. Anil DeSilva's book on the Buddha has won the acclaim of scholars.

There were also other Indian women married to French nationals then living in Paris. I know that two grand-daughters of Joseph Muliyil, one time lecturer in Malayalam at the Madras Christian College, were in Paris. Usha, daughter of General Chatterji who was a member of Netaji Subhas Bose's government, had married a French millowner named Grautrey. She had written several books in French on Hindu religion and dance.

[illegible] f life as ambassador in Paris was the [illegible] Among my numerous guests from [illegible] arya Kripalani, Kamaladevi Chatto- [illegible] H. V. R. Iyengar, Zakir Hussain and Saiyadain may be mentioned. There is an impression that because of his dietetic fads, Morarji Desai is a difficult guest. But the truth is quite different. Under medical advice, he had to eschew certain articles of food but since we were informed in advance about this, his stay presented no problem at all. Kripalani spent over a week with us. He is not the irritable

cynic that is his public image, but a friendly and intelligent individual and an engaging conversationalist. I had known Kamaladevi from early youth but it was only when she came to Paris and stayed with us that I could appreciate her quiet idealism and the value of her unostentatious labour for Indian handicrafts.

Our guests were not all our own compatriots. From England also friends used to drop in, sometimes for discussions, sometimes casually. Naomi Mitchison used to visit us almost once in two months. Other visitors were Kingsley Martin, editor of the *New Statesman*, Guy Wint, the Labour M. P., Woodrow Wyatt, John Strachey and Prof Joan Robinson of Cambridge. These visits were the source of great pleasure to me not only because these people were friends but because many of our conversations had fruitful results. For instance, Naomi Mitchison has herself described in the preface to her encyclopaedic work, *What is the Human Race up to?* that it was planned in my house. John Strachey had some discussion with me before rounding out his book, *The End of Imperialism*. Wint has made no secret of the fact that he has talked over many of his books with me. Conversely, I have no hesitation in saying that my own books have benefited from my discussions with these friends.

It was in the middle of this congenial and pleasant life that I went on 6 April 1959 to deliver a lecture at Munich. Actually, I had to make not one but three speeches in two days. I was not in the least unwell. I returned with every satisfaction. In fact our ambassador in Germany, Badruddin Tyabji, met me the evening I returned and we were talking for about one hour. When leaving he said 'I have never seen you in such excellent health. Congratulations.' I went to bed that night with this in my mind. But when I woke up next morning, I had suffered a stroke and could not get up!

I was moved to the hospital with my left side paralysed, but luckily I stayed there only for a week. Thanks to some of the best doctors in France, I was able to regain the use of my limbs. But even I had doubts if the person who got up from the

hospital bed was the same man. I was warned not to work as before, nor to concentrate for more than ninety minutes on anything and to live a severely restricted life. I resigned my job and returned home by sea. At least for one year, air travel was forbidden.

By the time I reached India, I had regained freedom of movement, but not my health. I had to remain an invalid for another six months. Once reading and writing are ruled out, what is left for a man like me? However, I consoled myself with the thought that I had been saved from the living death of a purely horizontal existence.

I am conscious that I may not have the strength to turn out any considerable work in future. However, I have not lost the hope that I may regain something like normal health and still lead a useful life. But I did not dare to hope that I would enter yet another chapter of my life or be able to write a few more books in English and in Malayalam. That I was enabled to do this is entirely due to the affection and efforts of my friend Desamangalam Vasudevan Nambudiripad. I spent a month in Trichur and under his supervision, the well-known Ayurvedic physician, Kuttamancheri Mooss treated me. The results exceeded my expectations. While I did not fully regain my memory and powers of concentration, I feel that I have almost been restored to normal physical health.

When I saw Nehru after returning from Paris, he had asked me what I would like to do on regaining normal health. When, thanks to Mooss' treatment, I was able to cast off the shackles of the invalid, I requested Nehru to nominate me to the Rajya Sabha. And when in due course, my physical health improved further, I repaired to that perennial health resort, Kashmir, as Vice-Chancellor of Jammu and Kashmir University.

I consider these as the unexciting pursuits appropriate to my stage in life, that of a *vanaprastha*! In the evening of my life, there was nothing I desired save the company of intellectuals in the midst of books and thus to end my days, writing what I could, free from the burden of affairs.

Appendix

(What follows are the first three chapters of an unfinished autobiography in English entitled 'Returning South' which was found among the papers of the author at the time of his death in Mysore in 1963.—*The Publisher*).

1

Homecoming

It was in the first week of April 1919 that I went up to Aligarh to take up my appointment as Professor of History in the then M.A.O. College (now the Muslim University). From that time, till 1 July 1963, a period of forty-four years and a few months, I have been virtually a resident of northern India except for a short period of eighteen months in Madras (from July 1922 to February 1924) when I worked as joint editor of *Swarajya*, a nationalist daily paper in English supporting the cause of Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress. During this long period of forty-four years I was identified in a large measure with the changing political life of northern India. My life was not confined to any single area. I was in Amritsar, as the representative of the Congress with the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabhandak Committee, the central social and political body of the Sikhs; in Delhi as the editor of *The Hindustan Times* and later as secretary to the Chamber of Princes; in Bhopal when the Chancellor of the Chamber was the ruler of that State; in Patiala as the Political and Education Minister; in Bikaner in different capacities, ending up as the Dewan of the State. Though after independence my sphere of activity lay mainly outside India, in China, the Middle East and France, my headquarters in India continued to be New Delhi. Again after my illness necessitating my retirement from diplomatic life, I was able to work. It was Kashmir University that I joined as Vice-Chancellor.

The circumstances of my first appointment to Aligarh which had this sequel were in themselves strange. Before leaving Oxford in 1918, I received a letter from my brother who was then posted in Bangalore as an officer in the Indian Medical Service that C. R. Reddi, one of the most distinguished educationists in India, then working as Director of Public Instruction in Mysore, had met him at a party and during the course of the conversation enquired when I was likely to return from Oxford. He also desired that on my arrival in India I should see him. My name had come to Reddi's notice in consequence of a lecture I had delivered to the East India Association some time in 1918 on 'Educational Reconstruction in India'. This lecture had received wide publicity in India both because the East India Association was the citadel of Anglo-Indiandom, which had at that time great influence with Reuters and the English dailies, then mainly owned by Europeans and secondly because *The Times Educational Supplement* had written a flattering leading article on the topic. It was also unusual for one studying at a university to be invited to address the *burra sahibs* of the Association. In fact it was the first time that so revolutionary a step was taken by that august body. The fact that I was a research scholar at Christ Church and was one of the two Indians who had up to that time obtained a first class honours at Oxford might have helped them to decide to invite me to lecture.

In any case that lecture brought my name to the notice of C. R. Reddi and undoubtedly changed the course of my life. On my return to India and after going home to my village and visiting my brother who was then in charge of the military hospital at Pallavaram near Madras, I proceeded to Bangalore to present myself to C. R. Reddi. Much depended on that interview. Though my academic career included not only a first class in honours but a diploma with distinction in political science and economics and a certificate also with distinction in social anthropology, all from Oxford, the only career open to me at that time in India was that of a teacher in a college.

The Indian Educational Service was a close preserve of Europeans and in any case my pronounced political views would have stood in the way of my appointment under the government. Dr T. M. Nair, the great non-Brahmin leader of Madras, had suggested my name to the trustees of Pachaiyappa's College as Principal of that institution but two weeks before my arrival in India that post had been filled up. The prospects did not seem too good and it was with some trepidation that I went to Bangalore to call on someone who seemed to appear suddenly as a benign godfather.

C. Ramalinga Reddi was one of the most gifted men of the time in India: one who seemed obviously meant for great things in national life. A scholar and poet of repute in Telugu, an administrator of distinction, an outstanding debater and speaker who in those early days—in the first decade of the century—had been elected Vice-President of the Cambridge Union and a brilliant conversationalist, Reddi seemed to my young eyes to be cut out to play a great role. At that time his reputation stood high in the academic world and much was expected of him, especially as it was known that he was interested in entering political life. I was soon to realize that this man of unusual gifts suffered from a split political personality. There was no problem that he could not analyze, understand and expound convincingly; but when it came to political action, it was not certain to which side he belonged. A fervent nationalist in his beliefs, it was to the Justice (the non-Brahmin) Party of Madras to which he gave his allegiance. While closely associated with that Party's leadership, his political sympathies and personal friendships were with the Congress. Later the position was reversed. At different times he joined the Congress, donned *khaddar*, issued strong public statements, but was engaged *sub rosa* in negotiations with the government. The result was that till his death he was politically a frustrated personality, who in the absence of certain loyalties could not rise to his full stature in public life. But though in political life—in which he engaged himself by fits and starts—he had to be written off as a failure, his record as an educationist was

outstanding. He was in a great measure responsible for the reorganization of Madras University by the Panagal Ministry. He built up Andhra University of which he was both the founding father and the first Vice-Chancellor, and as Pro-Chancellor of Mysore University also which he had earlier helped to create, his contributions were notable.

It is before this eminent personality that I presented myself with high hopes one day early in December 1918. Reddi was short of stature and apart from his high forehead not very impressive in appearance. But his conversation not only put me at ease but made a deep impression on me. I still remember our first conversation. After a few compliments on my record at Oxford and on my speech to the East India Association he asked me where I was staying. I replied that I was staying at the Modern Hotel, a hostelry which sought to combine modern comforts with Indian cooking and which had been highly recommended to me by friends in Madras. Reddi's reply was, 'It may be a hotel, but it is not modern enough for me; why don't you bring your luggage here?' The invitation was highly flattering but I excused myself on the ground that I was hoping to return the same day. Soon we came to the prospects of my employment. He said, 'It is not difficult to get you appointed in Mysore; but I would advise against your service in an Indian State. As it appears I think I could fix you up at the M.A.O. College, Aligarh. The European senior professors there have resigned as a body and the college authorities require Indians with high academic qualifications. Masood has in fact asked me to suggest some names. That is the place for you.'

It was exciting news. The M.A.O. College was one of the premier educational institutions in the country. Though it was affiliated to Allahabad University it was an all-India educational centre and its reputation extended far beyond national boundaries. Professional appointments at the college had so far been reserved mainly for Europeans and the salary grades were the same as those in the Indian Educational Service. For a raw graduate nothing more suitable in the educational

line could be imagined. Naturally I expressed my gratitude and immediately Reddi sent for his secretary and dictated a letter to Ross Masood who was then Director of Public Instruction in the Nizam's government at Hyderabad and asked me to take it personally to him.

I returned to Madras, reported to my brother and left for Hyderabad on 31 December 1918. I presented myself at Masood's house in the morning. It was one of the most momentous interviews of my life, for within five minutes I had found a staunch friend for life, gained the promise of the appointment for which I had come and had practically been launched on my career.

Ross Masood was in every way a most remarkable figure. The son of Justice Mahmud and the only grandson in the male line of Sir Syed Ahmed, the regenerator of Islam in India and one of the most notable figures of the last century, Ross Masood was descended from a family of nobles closely connected with the Mogul Court and later with the British government. His first name Ross was in memory of Sir Alexander Ross, a Scottish personage who had been a friend of Justice Mahmud. Brought up in England under the guardianship of Sir Theodore Morrison and educated at New College, Oxford, Masood was in many ways a perfect synthesis of the East and the West. E. M. Forster who was his life-long friend has written a perceptive study of Masood's personality in his well-known book, *Two Cheers for Democracy*.

In appearance Masood was extremely striking. He stood over six feet three inches in height and was broad in proportion—altogether an impressive figure. Though to those who did not know him he gave the impression of being aloof, he was when the ice was broken easy and friendly in conversation. Unlike Reddi he spoke deliberately and without desire for effects or larding his conversation with epigrams. His intellectual distinction was no less remarkable. Apart from English, he knew French and Italian extremely well. He was also reported to be a fine critic of Urdu poetry, having

edited a volume of Ghalib's poems. For some reason, from the first moment of my interview with him he took a great liking for me. Our conversation was brief: 'About your appointment do not worry. I make myself responsible. I shall write now to my cousin who is the secretary of the College. He has authorised me to make the selections and let him know.' Without waiting for my thanks he began dictating a letter couched in the most extravagant terms, emphasising the necessity of deciding this matter without waiting even for a formal application—as I might be picked up by someone else. I was amazed and my gratitude knew no bounds. In fact till his death I remained grateful to him as I am to his memory even today.

As soon as the letter was finished he dismissed me with the words, 'Go to your hotel, get your luggage and be at the station. I am leaving for Madras with Hydari to attend a senate meeting. There are many things I want to talk to you. Naturally I did not fail to turn up at the station well in advance. Travelling with us to Madras was Akbar Hydari, then the Finance Secretary of the Hyderabad government. He had been loaned to the Nizam's service from the Audit and Accounts Department. He had already established a reputation for administrative capacity, imaginative finance and general political ability. A short, stocky man with an aquiline nose, small but penetrating eyes, sporting an imperial beard, Akbar Hydari did not cut an impressive figure in the presence of Masood. But a few minutes' conversation with him was sufficient to convince one that he was an extraordinary man possessed with a very acute discerning mind capable of quick judgment of men and affairs with wide-ranging interests, not usually associated with the Audit service, a humanist interested in religion, philosophy and the arts. At this time in 1919, he was only a Finance Secretary, an officer of fair seniority in the government of India. I did not then foresee not only the eminence that he would achieve in future years as a Privy Councillor and as a pillar of the British Empire but also the association—often in co-operation but no less often in opposition—that

will be forced upon us in the question of the relationship of the Princely States with the Indian Constitution.

Hydari took kindly to me from the beginning especially when he knew that his son was at Oxford with me. This kindness and friendship I am glad to say lasted till the end, though often during the discussions following the Round Table Conference we became champions of different and often opposing points of view.

In Madras, Masood forced me to accompany him to the house of Justice Abdur Rahim where both of them had been invited to stay. Abdur Rahim also pressed me to remain as a guest of his but I was unwilling, but Masood in the dominating manner which he often assumed asked the servants to take my luggage and put it in one of the front rooms. What persuaded me, however, finally to accept the invitation was the fact that the great Surendranath Bannerji who had come to Madras for the Southborough Commission was a fellow house-guest. Abdur Rahim mentioned this during the course of a conversation with Hydari and that decided me. I realized that such an opportunity to meet on informal terms so great a national leader may not arise for many years and then for three days I was a house-guest of Abdur Rahim along with Surendranath Bannerji, Akbar Hydari and Ross Masood.

Surendranath Bennerji had been one of my idols from the earliest days. His speeches collected under the title *The Trumpet Voice of India* and published, I think, by Ganesan and Co. was a constant companion of my high-school days. True, 'Surrender not' Bannerji of the old days, the champion orator of India, one of the founding fathers of the national movement, the hero of the partition agitation had also become a moderate, but the glamour of the great name still remained. At this time Babu Surendranath was a shrivelled up man, with nothing to bespeak of his former greatness except his flaming eyes. But though apparently weak and aged he had the habit of going out at 5 o'clock in the morning for a walk. Though I was never addicted to these habits of physical exertion, at his suggestion I joined him for the next three days.

It was indeed a great experience to be thus brought into contact with so eminent a national leader. He talked of many things, reminisced endlessly and gave me sound advice on many issues. But one thing struck me as strange. Whatever the subject of the talk he had a habit of coming back to a story of continuing and bitter persecution by the British authorities. Though I was surprised and indignant to start with, I realized soon enough that whatever might have been his experience in the past, the stories of the C.I.D. following him wherever he went and the post offices interfering with his mail were all part of an *idée fixe* at the present time. It was clear to me that the old gentleman while retaining his intellectual powers and especially clarity of thought and expression had developed a persecution complex.

One other experience of that visit to Madras is worth recording. Masood and I went together to a bookshop on Mount Road, not Higginbothams but a new one which disappeared long ago. There in the shop was a Brahmin gentleman in a long black coat and turban casually looking over the new books displayed prominently on the shelves. He was in every way a striking figure and Masood and he greeted each other with great cordiality. It was C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, already a notable figure in Madras life and Indian politics. Masood introduced me and I reminded him that he had honoured me with an introduction to a book which I had written at Oxford to compete for a prize offered by him. He either remembered it or was polite enough to say so. That was my first contact with Sir C.P. with whom also it fell to my lot to come into association and opposition at a later stage.

After the meeting of the senate Masood returned to Hyderabad and I went back to my brother at Pallavaram, there to await patiently the summons from Aligarh.

2

Life at Aligarh

I received the call from Aligarh for a formal interview at the end of March 1919. On arrival there early in April, I was met at the station by the secretary of the college, Syed Mohammed Ali, later Nawab Mohammed Ali, a cousin of Masood, who looked after the administration of the college. Mohammed Ali was Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's grandson and enjoyed great authority in the affairs of the institution. A member of the Statutory Civil Service, equivalent to the latter-day I.C.S. by nomination, he had retired as District and Sessions Judge. A man of very methodical habits, he had filed every bill and receipt and kept his accounts in his own handwriting ever since he joined service. Mohammed Ali on closer acquaintance belied his stern and forbidding appearance and showed himself a friendly and a warm-hearted gentleman. I stayed with him in his house for over a week when my affairs were being settled. Though the vacations were due to begin in a month's time the college authorities desired that I should join immediately which was an act of special consideration, for they could well have appointed me at the opening of the new term in July. For the rest of the term Mohammed Ali arranged for me to be put up at the house of Sahebzada Aftab Ahmad Khan, then a member of the Secretary of States' Council, whose daughter Zohra Begum, was married to Masood. Later, when the college reopened I shifted first to a private house and later to a college house when it fell vacant within a few months' time.

My stay at Aligarh extended over three years but it covered a very important period in that institution's history as it witnessed the crisis arising from the Khilafat and the non-co-operation movement, and the transformation of the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College into the Muslim University. There was little communal feeling—at least among the students—at that time and even among the professors quite a

few held a broadly national point of view. Fazlur Rahman, my senior colleague, in the history department and later Vice-Chancellor, Mohammed Haider, Professor of Chemistry, and many others whom I came to know well were totally devoid of communal feelings. D. Wali Mohammed, a noted physicist, who was the acting Principal when I joined, apart from his queer interest in erotic literature of which he had probably the best collection in India, was also friendly to me and helped me a great deal with his advice in the early days.

Though generally speaking the senior members of the staff were friendly and had a non-communal approach to national problems, I do not think the same could be said of Dr Ziauddin who was the Principal of the college and later Vice-Chancellor of the university and came almost to be identified with the institution over a long period. Ziauddin had a distinguished career at Cambridge as a mathematician and I was told was an excellent professor of that subject. But in his later days as Principal and as Vice-Chancellor he was interested more in university administration than in teaching. It would not be an exaggeration to say he identified himself with it. He lived for the university and had no other thought. But his idea of the university was something strange. He was not interested in academic standards, scholarship, research or even Islamic studies. He looked upon the college and university as the instrument for the effective participation by the Muslims in political power. Aligarh must provide sufficient numbers of Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Superintendents of Police for the Punjab and U.P. and senior officials for the Muslim Princely States from Hyderabad to Bhawalpur. This was his ambition; and he succeeded in it without question. In the direct recruitment from *tahsildars* upwards, Dr Ziauddin kept a sharp watch and he saw to it that Aligarh provided the lion's share in this division of spoils.

This meant of course that not a breath of nationalist or anti-government scandal should reach Aligarh. But the times were out of joint for such an isolation of Aligarh from what was happening in the rest of India. From 1912 there was a

growing pan-Islamic feeling at Aligarh, which took its cue from Maulana Mohammed Ali. By 1919 as a result of the growth of pro-Turkish feeling, consequent upon the hard conditions imposed on the Ottoman empire by the Treaty of Sèvres, the younger section had become anti-British. But Ziauddin fought hard for his point of view and in this fight he had the support of the College Court, the final authority in respect of the college which was dominated by Nawabs, landlords, and Deputy Collectors. But there was a deep charm which was noticeable even to an outsider between him and the students—and the staff with a few exceptions stood by him.

I do not know whether Ziauddin was a communal fanatic. Since between us there was never any sympathy, I cannot claim to be a judge on this matter. But he once said in my presence at a dinner given to bid goodbye to Dr Wali Mohammed who was going to take up a post in the government of India that though he was sorry to lose him from the college he willingly let him go for otherwise the post would go to a Hindu. This statement came as a shock to me then, as it seemed to indicate that Ziauddin looked at these things from the point of view of capturing key points in communal interest. His attitude towards me was outwardly correct but I came to know at a later period from no less a person than the Home Member of the U.P. government, the Rajah of Mahmudabad, that he had conveyed to the government during the non-co-operation crisis that followed that I was a crypto-revolutionary and should be kept under careful surveillance! It would appear that no action was taken on this report because Sir Richard Burn who was then the Home Secretary and who had been at Christ Church and had known me briefly when we travelled together in the boat back to India noted that the statement was wholly untrue. An instance of the influence of the old college tie!

In 1919 when I joined it, Aligarh was going through a period of intense nationalism. The Punjab incidents and the massacre of Jallianwalla Bagh which took place at the time of my arrival had a profound impact on the students. The atmos-

phere in India at the time was generally nationalist and this was reflected also at Aligarh. I had a rather striking experience of this mood among the students. In an essay period in the second year B.A. Class I asked them to write a paper on the most eminent of living Indians. This was before Gandhiji had come on the scene. To my surprise all but two wrote on Pandit Malaviya, the recognized and unquestioned leader of orthodox Hinduism, distrusted by Muslims in general and by Muslim politicians in particular. The young students had forgotten Malaviya's Hindu orthodoxy in the gratitude he had earned for his heroic and almost single-handed work in exposing the atrocities in the Punjab. At that time one could almost sense the growing sense of independence.

It is in this tense atmosphere that the non-co-operation movement began to spread at Aligarh. Maulana Mohammed Ali had a well-organized group both among the staff and the students whose pan-Islamic enthusiasm was turned through the Khilafat movement into an aggressive nationalism. When the movement was launched the national leaders including Gandhiji, Maulana Azad and the Ali brothers descended on Aligarh. The enthusiasm was immense. Gandhiji and the Maulanas asked the students to leave the college and non-co-operate both in the national interest and in the interest of Islam identified with the Khilafat and Turkey. There must have been some preliminary work among the students. Even so the result was something totally unexpected. The students followed the call of Gandhiji and boycotted the college in a state of high exaltation. The M.A.O. College, so long considered a citadel of Anglo-India, seemed to fall even without offering a nominal resistance. The story of the Walls of Jericho falling to the trumpet call of the angel seem to repeat itself. The authorities closed the college and set themselves to the task of salvaging what was possible from the wreck. The opportunity was utilized to transform itself into a university and before long the M.A.O. College, founded by Sir Syed Ahmed and nourished lovingly by generations of Anglo-Muslim dignitaries, emerged from the crisis as the Aligarh Muslim University.

On the other side of the campus separated only by a street arose also the new National Muslim University which was in time destined to take root and grow into the Jamia Millia Islamia. The moving spirit of that institution apart from the national leaders like Maulana Mohammed Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr Ansari was a young man named Zakir Hussain who had been my student in the M.A. Class for six months. A leader of the new generation of Aligarh students he was the most prominent of the young men who had joined the movement. He made Jamia Millia his life's work and raised it in course of time to the position of a national university. That however lay in the womb of time. At that time its prospects did not seem bright. Housed in a rented bungalow, staffed by a miscellaneous group of brilliant young men from different parts of India, among whom was a young Law graduate, an old college-mate of mine in Madras, G. V. Krupanidhi, fed on enthusiasm, politics and poverty, the Jamia Millia did not arouse much hopes of a healthy growth. The story of its survival is the life story of Zakir Hussain.

My own position at the time of the college crisis was rather difficult. Dr Ziauddin and some of the other members of the staff looked upon me as a concealed non-co-operator. Among the students who had gone across to the Jamia, I continued for some unknown reason—probably from their instinctive recognition that my sympathies were nationalist—to be popular. In my own mind I was very clear about my course of action. As a Hindu professor in a Muslim college I felt I had a special sense of responsibility and an unwritten but fully recognized obligation not to interfere in the internal politics of the college. I explained this fully to Mahatma Gandhi who had sent for me along with other members of the staff. He understood and appreciated my point of view and did not, I am happy to say, press me. Maulana Mohammed Ali was also most sympathetic. I had many long conversations with him and a strange friendship developed between us and to which he gave eloquent expression in a long article in the *Comrade* in 1925 when I resigned from *The Hindustan Times*.

Mohammed Ali was that strange phenomenon, a genuine Mulla from Oxford. Deeply versed in Muslim theology, history and Persian and Urdu literature he also bore conspicuously the hallmark of his stay at Oxford, brilliant and witty conversation, a more than superficial knowledge of European life and letters, a trained and analytical mind, an effective if at times diffuse style of writing in English. We took to each other at our first interview. A good deal of his kindness to me—which he never failed to show till the very end—was I believe due to his nostalgia about Oxford—again the old school tie. The friendship with Mohammed Ali was to stand me in good stead in the years to come.

With the transformation of the college into a university and the departure of F. A. Rahman to Dacca I became the head of the department of history and a university professor, a position in which I was confirmed in 1921. But it was clear that my future did not lie there. Aligarh was a blind alley so far as I was concerned. Also the pro-government group looked upon me with increasing suspicion. Looking back upon it I can see that they were perhaps justified in their attitude. Across in the rival national Muslim university were many of my students like Zakir Hussain and Nurullah with whom I continued to maintain close relations. Also on its staff were two of my friends from Madras, G. V. Krupanidhi and K. Santhanam who were among the earliest non-co-operators and who often used to come and see me in my house. In my innocence I did not think that such friendly contacts could be misunderstood. When the question of my confirmation came up I am told that Dr Ziauddin frankly declared that my influence was not altogether wholesome and that it was best for the new university that my services should be terminated early. But I had found a staunch friend in the new set-up that the University Act introduced. Dr Ziauddin though pro-Vice-Chancellor now and therefore the active administrative head of the university had to work under the Rajah of Mahmudabad who had been elected the first Vice-Chancellor. Though one of the leading *taluqdars* of Oudh, the Rajah Saheb had a

distinguished and unblemished record as a nationalist. When his *dharam bhai*, Sir Harcourt Butler, became the Governor of the United Provinces, Mahmudabad was appointed Home Member in his government. Thus to his prestige with the community as a premier nobleman had been added the authority of the Home Ministership of the province. For some reason he disliked intensely the policies and methods of Ziauddin and made no secret of his dislike for him. For some reason the Rajah Saheb was not only kind and sympathetic towards me from the beginning but showed marked signs of friendship. He invited me along with some others a few times to Lucknow where we stayed as his guests at the Kaisarbag Palace. During one of these visits he told me that he was anxious that I should join the new Lucknow University as the head of the department of political science. He added that he had on his own fixed up terms which I would find attractive and suggested that after the coming long vacation (1922) I should resign from Aligarh and join Lucknow. I agreed with pleasure as there was in any case greater opportunities for me at Lucknow than in a denominational university. But that was not how it was fated to happen. It was to join *Swarajya* of Madras—a newly founded Congress daily under the personal direction of the great Andhra leader, T. Prakasam—that I actually left Aligarh in July 1922 after three years and a few months of service.

The circumstances which brought about this change are not without interest. I had always been interested in journalism and as early as May 1919—in fact almost immediately after my joining Aligarh—had been invited by Lokamanya Tilak to join Baptista, his close associate in starting a nationalist paper from Delhi. This was as a result of his having read in manuscript a book of mine entitled *Indian Nationalism* which I had written when I was at Oxford and which was published by the well-known Faith Press of Manchester. On hearing from him I had even visited Poona and stayed with him for three days at Gaekwad Wada to discuss this matter—a strange enough procedure as I can now see for one only

recently employed as professor of the pro-government M.A.O. College. But nothing came of it as the Lokamanya passed away the very next year. But my journalistic ambitions had not been quenched. G. V. Krupanidhi to whom I have alluded earlier had joined Prakasam as Manager of *Swarajya* and at his request I had been writing a column of comments over the signature *Sans Commentaire*. Krupanidhi was also pressing me to join the paper as the effective editor. There was also at that time another influence working on me in the same direction. That came strangely enough from an I. C. S. officer, N. C. Mehta, who was posted at Aligarh as Joint Magistrate. Mehta, a distinguished Cambridge graduate was one of those rare beings, an intellectual civilian, who apart from his nationalist impulses was then developing his artistic tastes which in later times were to take him to the top ranks of Indian art critics. In another respect also he was an unusual type. Though a member of the I.C.S., he preferred to keep company with Indians. We had become friends from the beginning, a friendship which lasted till his death. His influence on me at that time was very considerable as we used to meet every day and discuss things in general. For one thing I am grateful to him. He put me on to the study of ancient Indian history, for he kept on insisting that no one can really understand modern developments in India without a knowledge of the growth of the Indian people. He put me on to a long voyage of the discovery of India. He also kept on pressing me to give up the educational line—an advice the wisdom of which was not equally obvious. So I resigned from Aligarh before I left for the summer vacation. But I had not made up my mind as to what I should do, whether to join Lucknow University or to go in for journalism.

The three years at Aligarh were of great importance for my mental growth. I took up seriously the study of Indian history, making use of the very valuable library at the college. The *Corpus Inscriptionus Indicanum* a set of which the college possessed was my main interest at the time. It opened up my vision of Indian history and a short monograph on Harsha,

the first to be published in English, which I wrote at the time was my maiden effort in Indian historical writing. I also kept up my general interest in education and a collection of studies entitled *Essays in Educational Reconstruction* published in 1921 by Ganesh and Co. bears witness to my activities in this field. Even more significant was a publication entitled *Imperialism* (1922) which gave a foretaste of the ideas and doctrines which were to find elaboration in my *Asia and Western Dominance*. Also I was at the same time carrying on with some library work in Malayalam both in poetry and in prose. A realistic novel entitled *Dorassini*, written when I was confined to the house after an attack of chickenpox, and a volume of verses entitled *Gandhari at Kurukshetra* neither of which has been reprinted represent my activities in Malayalam at this period. Though added up they do not amount to much, they are of some significance at witnessing the continuity of the main trends of my intellectual activity in the years to come: Indian history, relations of Europe with Asia, education and Malayalam literature. In short, Aligarh helped me to find myself.

I am especially proud of my stay at Aligarh, and of my relations with some of the students whom I had the honour of teaching. Of these I may mention specially Zakir Hussain, K. G. Sayaidain, N. L. Ahmed, Syed Nurullah and Sarwar Hasan. Zakir Hussain was so to say my first student and for some reason he has always proclaimed it publicly. Speaking at the convocation at Kashmir University in 1962, Zakir Saheb as he is known affectionately declared with emotion that he wished he could be young again to be taught by me. This has been his attitude ever since our Aligarh days. Sayaidain who is perhaps the most eminent educational thinker in India was my student all the three years that I was at Aligarh and our relations have continued to be most cordial ever since. With N. L. Ahmed who after a distinguished carrier in Bombay is now a member of the Central Public Service Commission my relations were of the most affectionate kind. With many others also relations built up at Aligarh have continued throughout life giving it a richness and depth which I have valued greatly.

Life at Aligarh was also important because it also gave me certain insights which otherwise I would not have gained. The most important of these was the realization that for Muslims, the history of India began in reality with the arrival of Islam in this country. Ibn Kassim's invasion of Sind was the prelude: Mahmud Ghazni's raids constituted a thrilling overture, and real history began with Mohammed Ghori and Kutubuddin. This came as a shock to me at that time. No one in Aligarh had the least interest in the long pre-Islamic history of India. It stuck me as strange that while a great number of Hindu scholars had written on Indo-Muslim history, and the classic biography of Aurangzeb is by a Hindu writer, not a single Muslim scholar had contributed anything on any period of pre-Islamic history. Later, when I began to study Islamic historiography I realized that the vision of history was a revelation of God's will, beginning with the creation, the prophets, the final revelation of the *Quran* through Mohammed, the Khalifs, and the expansion of Islam. So from this point of view India comes into history only when Islam reaches it. Consciously or unconsciously this was the view that the students at Aligarh held though they were then going through a period of nationalism.

Another lesson which struck me in the face at Aligarh was the integration of Islam as a single community in India. The unifying forces of Islam even among peoples of different ethnic composition is well known. In India, though in early days there seems to have been some rivalry between Hindustani and foreign Muslims, and Deccani and Hindustani groups, the crisis in Islam in the nineteenth century had brought them together and helped to cement the common Islamic feeling. Of this movement the radiating centre was Aligarh which also elevated Urdu, originally a common language of Hindus and Muslims in the Gangetic Valley, into a national language of Muslim unification. Aligarh represented the new united force of Islam in India. The leadership had two faces, one looking towards the British authorities, obsequiously smiling, and the other towards Hindus suspicious and frowning. This represented what may be called the official leadership domi-

nated by Nawabs, Khan Bahadurs and others of whom the best representative was Ziauddin. There was another aspect of Aligarh, pan-Islamist and anti-British which found but little support in the official leadership, but had in many times considerable influence among students. It is this group that had turned to nationalism for a time. Even so far as this group was concerned the separate integration of Islam as a community was a fact which could not be denied.

On the whole, it may be said that my three years' stay at Aligarh was from many points of view fruitful, not the least in giving me an understanding of the complexities of the Hindu-Muslim problem.

3

A Journalistic Interlude

When I reached Madras in June 1922 on my way to Kerala for the summer holidays I had not yet made up my mind about the future. I had resigned from Aligarh on the basis of a firm offer from Lucknow; but a spirit of adventure and restlessness beckoned me to journalism. In Madras, Krupanidhi took me to Prakasam who was the moving spirit, managing director and editor of *Swarajya*, the new Congress paper, and between them they persuaded me to join the paper as joint editor. I did not hesitate for long. After a short holiday at home in my village, I donned *khaddar*, joined the Congress and became the effective editor of a leading nationalist daily.

Congress politics in Madras at that time was dominated by three major figures, each of whom contributed later his share to the national life: C. Rajagopalachari, S. Srinivasa Aiyangar and T. Prakasam. Rajagopalachari was a provincial lawyer from Salem who had transferred his activities to the capital and had established his control of the provincial organization. S. Srinivasa Aiyangar had resigned from his Advocate-

Generalship and had sacrificed his very flourishing legal practice and therefore claimed that he had a right to special recognition and to be accepted as a leader on par with C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru. The third was T. Prakasam whose position was different from that of the other two, in so far as he was an Andhra and represented the growing discontent of the Andhra people against Tamil domination. Between the three there was intense jealousy and rivalry. The division of power was somewhat as follows: Prakasam's interest in Andhra politics and in the Andhra section of Madras city was not contested by the other two. So far as Tamil Nadu was concerned it was obvious that between Rajagopalachari and Srinivasa Aiyangar there was going on a bitter fight for leadership. Srinivasa Aiyangar had not only an established social position in Madras but very considerable financial resources at his disposal. Rajagopalachari on the other hand was much more capable in organizational matters and had a tight control over the younger workers through whom he managed the provincial Congress Committee. As both were Iyengars, *The Hindu*, which under the veteran Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was the cautious mouth-piece of moderate Congress leadership, steered a middle course. In many ways Srinivasa Aiyangar was a remarkable man, a man of the most acute mind, deeply patriotic, industrious and prepared for every sacrifice. But he had one weakness. He was egocentric. Conversation with him was an unending monologue in which the other party was treated as a public audience. His constant theme which he expounded to me more than once was that he was the Gandhi of the South, but the other Congress leaders were not giving him the disciplined obedience that the Mahatma received. Later on as is well known he became the deputy leader of the Swaraj Party in the assembly and an advocate of immediate independence. He was a most colourful figure in the Madras politics of the time.

About C. Rajagopalachari not much need be said. Though his intellectual ability and intense patriotism were undoubted, even then he was not a popular figure. I do not think he even

cared for popularity. Certainly he did not crave for it. But he saw further than most people, held together around him a group of young men intensely loyal to him personally and through them controlled the political machinery of the State Congress. In the city itself his influence was not very considerable. Between Srinivasa Aiyangar who led the Tamils in the city and Prakasam who was the leader of the Andhras, Rajagopalachari found himself edged out.

The last of the two was Prakasam who may be described a rough diamond. His patriotism was beyond question; but what dominated his politics was Andhra nationalism, a sense of grievance against the Tamil domination of Madras politics for over a century. A legendary figure in the Telugu country, his influence in Madras was marginal except among the considerable Andhra population of the city. It was in order to make the voice of the Andhras heard in national politics and to make the all-India leadership realize that Madras was not the exclusive area of the Tamils that Prakasam established *Swarajya.*

In the second line of leadership stood two remarkable men who though they did not achieve power left an indelible mark on Madras: S. Satyamurti and A. Rangaswamy Aiyangar. Satyamurti was a very gifted patriot. A staunch nationalist from his school days he had undergone every suffering. Perhaps the most polished orator of his time, with a clear understanding of political issues and capacity for hard work he seemed designed to rise to the highest stature in our political life. But he suffered from two serious handicaps. He did not have the financial resources necessary in those days to build up the position of a great leader; and what was even worse the oligarchy of Mylapore could not tolerate an outsider to rise beyond a certain level. But all the same, Satyamurti whose greatness is now recognized and who has through his disciple Kamaraj dominated the State posthumously after Independence, was a power in Madras politics.

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The second figure who also did not live to see India independent and in his lifetime did not achieve national leader-

ship but played a considerable part in politics and later in the Swaraj Party was A. Rangaswamy Aiyangar. Connected with the powerful group which owned *The Hindu* newspaper, and himself at that time the editor of the leading Tamil daily *Swadeshamitran*, Rangaswamy Aiyangar was a power behind the scenes. He was that rare genius, the constructive politician and therefore was temperamentally unfit for a popular democratic leadership. Through his papers he greatly influenced the political opinion of the province at the time. Later he found fulfilment as a most successful secretary of the Swaraj Party in the Assembly.

Behind all the political work of the province there stood *The Hindu*, then as now recognized as one of the best and most influential papers in India. A family concern, edited with great discrimination by that veteran journalist Kasturi Ranga Iyangar, *The Hindu*, in a measure, stood above group pressures and party affiliations beyond a general support to the policies of the Congress. If it had a sense of group feeling it was only the reflection of the prejudices of the oligarchy of Mylapore. Broadly it maintained its character as a frearless champion of nationalism—cautious in regard to extreme policies and staid and steady, without bias in the presentation of news. To compete with this well-established and highly esteemed paper, *Swarajya* had a most difficult task. It had to emphasize its Andhra character, woo the Malayali readers, who were generally partisans of *The Hindu*, concentrate on special issues giving to the paper a flavour of sensationalism. Also in local Madras politics *Swarajya* tried to strike out a new policy of supporting the nationalist wing of the non-Brahmin movement, thus to separate itself from the allegedly pro-Brahmin attitude of *The Hindu*.

This was the line I had marked out from the beginning. As there was not the same bitterness against the Brahmins in Andhra districts as there was in Tamil Nadu, the directors of the paper did not seriously object to it. If it is asked how the orthodoxy of the paper as an organ of Gandhian non-co-operation could be reconciled with the partial though

qualified support of the non-Brahmin movement, as different from the pro-government Justice Party, the clear answer to that question was that the Congress movement in Madras at least so far as provincial politics was concerned had become altogether unreal while it was true that in matters relating to all-India policies, and generally on the question of national freedom the people of Madras were on the whole Congress-minded as the general elections were to prove; in provincial politics the non-Brahmin movement was dominant and the Congress was in effect nowhere. This was clearly proved by the fact that in the higher Congress leadership there was not a single non-Brahmin, and even men like E. V. Ramaswamy Naciker and Ramanathan, the then *chelas* of Rajagopalachari were soon to become champions of an aggressive non-Brahminism. So long as the Congress leadership in Madras was in Brahmin hands it was bound to be ineffective. It was too clear to me from the beginning that it was only by creating a body of nationalist non-Brahmin opinion that the Congress could be effective in Madras.

The non-Brahmin movement, of which one hears but little now was in its origin a social revolt against the age-long claims of the Brahmins. Led by two remarkable men, Dr T. M. Nair from Kerala and P. Thyagaroya Chetty from Andhra, it had in the period between 1915 and 1919 captured the imagination of the non-Brahmin middle classes of the Presidency who had long resented the domination of the Brahmins. These classes had risen high in educational attainments and attained economic prosperity but in politics and the liberal professions they found their way barred except in Malabar by the long established authority of the Brahmins. Dr T. M. Nair was a man gifted with immense vigour and initiative, sturdy intellectual indifference and great vision in politics. Combining his forces with Thyagaroya Chetty, a businessman of unusual commonsense and great personal integrity, who had influence with the Andhra community in Madras, he launched the non-Brahmin movement which in its early days secured the support of the British Civil Service who saw in this a welcome opportunity

to weaken the nationalist movement in Madras. Undoubtedly in its early days the non-Brahmin movement was pro-British because as Dr Nair once explained to me, the movement could not have made much headway against the entrenched power and influence of the Brahmins without active government support. But when following the Montague-Chelmsford report the non-Brahmin movement came into power, they showed themselves to be as patriotic as anyone else in local politics and were wise enough to leave all-India politics to the Congress.

Dr T. M. Nair died just before the Montague-Chelmsford reforms introducing dyarchy in the provinces was given effect to. So the leadership of the movement devolved on Thyagaroya Chetty whose wise and cautious guidance held together the three sections of Andhras, Tamils and Malayalis who each wanted effective voice in the Party. When the Party was returned to power as a result of the elections Thyagaroya Chetty refused to accept office himself and left the working of the Constitution to younger men. Thus during the period of my association with Madras politics the effective leader of the Party and the Chief Minister in control of the popular section of the Cabinet was Ramarayasingar, better known by his later title of the Rajah of Panagal. Panagal was the scion of an ancient and illustrious house. Gifted with great administrative capacities and a knowledge of the realities of politics, he could be said to have turned to the best use the powers given under the Montague-Chelmsford Act. Among his notable achievements was the Madras Religious Endowment Act by which the income and the properties vested in the temples were treated as public trust and brought under the control of a statutory Religious Endowment Board empowered to see that the incomes were properly used and the endowments were not frittered away. By this single act of undoubted and far-reaching public good, the Hindu community as a whole instead of the Brahmins and a few noble families became the beneficiaries of the wealth of the Hindu temples.

Under Panagal's leadership the Party had turned to constructive politics in place of the sterile anti-Brahminism of the

earlier days. Also it had stabilized itself. Consequently the Congress was left without much influence in local politics. So after a short survey of the local situation, I decided to give to the non-Brahmin politics of the province some prominence in the paper. The idea behind my policy was to encourage the growing nationalist section in the Party, which while adhering to the principles of social change which the Party championed desired to break away from the pro-British shackles which the early leadership had thrust on it. Just before I returned to Madras, my friend C. Ramalinga Reddy who as narrated in the first chapter had interested himself in my affairs since I came back from Oxford, had resigned his post in Mysore in order to take up a political life. He had joined the non-Brahmin party where his ardent nationalism combined with a restless ambition and unusual brilliance of thought and expression aroused bitter jealousy and opposition among the entrenched leadership who had tasted the first fruits of power. Reddy was a temperamental dissenter and was only too willing to join hands with anybody to attack the party leadership. He turned to me as someone whom he could depend upon. It suited my work as I not only received inside information of government activities but pungent articles about the politics of the government. So I mounted a campaign against the Panagal Ministry and all its policies from a broad nationalist point of view but giving veiled support to the dissenters. I kept on this campaign unrelentingly and it had considerable effect in the elections of 1923 when many of the dissenters were returned at the top of the polls.

Apart from this campaign in favour of a non-Brahmin nationalism another thing I attempted to do was to create popular interest in specific items by turning the spotlight on issues likely to raise public emotions. A few instances which I remember well now, and which created a sensation at the time may be briefly mentioned. The first related to the case of a Hindu girl student of a convent who was spirited away surreptitiously by the missionaries for the purpose of proselytization. The parents of the girl had come to me with their

suspicions and started on a vigorous campaign about the unfair means used by convents and the secretive manner in which the girl had been taken away. Day in and day out, I kept on the agitation, asking the police to find out where the girl was. Prominent public men were interviewed; statements were taken from public workers, public meetings were arranged and for a whole week *Swarajya* created a sensation about the girl. By the end of the week the girl had been recovered and brought back from her hiding place and returned to her parents.

A second issue which was not so sensational but was sufficiently interesting from the public point of view related to a proposal to take temple dancing girls as attractions to the Imperial Exhibition at Wembly. The Exhibition Commissioner was a friend of mine: T. Vijayaraghavachari whom I knew rather well as a former Dewan of Cochin. Vijayaraghavachari thought that the Indian pavilion in Wembly will gain in popularity and attraction if a few bayaderes from Madras could be taken there. The proposal, I was told, had been favourably received by the government. The official Congress policy was against participation in the Wembly Exhibition as being nothing but imperialist propaganda and therefore when the news reached me that the authorities were making preparations to recruit a troupe of dancing girls for this purpose I opened a campaign with an indignant editorial about the shame of it all. The leading dancers of Madras including the famous Bangalore Nagaratnam and numerous lesser known figures were personally interviewed, all of whom were reported as protesting vigorously against the insult to their community which this proposal involved. The help of social reformers, a philistine crowd, with prejudices against dancing even as an art was also sought and obtained. For a nearly a fortnight *Swarajya* featured nothing else. Finally, the proposal was dropped.

The third campaign which was of greater public importance related to a proposal by the retiring Governor to take over the assets of Tawker and Co., a famous firm or jewellers then

in liquidation. The proposal was that after retirement the Governor concerned should arrange to sell the assets of the firm, estimated to go into millions, in London and other international centres. The whole proposal seemed strange. The propriety of such a transaction being mooted when the person concerned was still the head of the province was very doubtful. Some of the letters issued which came into my possession were written on Government House paper by an officer who was then A.D.C. to the Governor. Vidyasagar Pandya, then Manager of the Indian Bank whom some of the creditors had approached brought the fact to my notice. I know I was playing with fire, for *Swarajya* could be subjected to a great deal of official and non-official pressure by Government House which still controlled the law and order side if the administration so wished. But it was too good an opportunity to be missed. I published a brief account in the paper and in order to whet the appetite of the public printed one of the letters and suggested that sensational revelations would follow. But before the whole scheme could be exposed the rag was pulled from under my feet and I found myself without a job.

The circumstances of the abrupt termination of my post remains still a mystery. The rumour which found wide credence was that Government House and its agents put pressure on the Board of Directors of the company threatening action against the paper on grounds of sedition unless I was summarily removed. This may or may not have been true, though I believe pressure was brought to bear upon some members of the Board who in their turn persuaded Prakasam to take immediate action. Whatever the circumstances, I found one morning that my services were terminated abruptly without cause or reason given. Thus ended my connection with Madras politics.

During the twenty months that I was in Madras there were two major political events to which some allusion may be made here. The first was the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Commission under the leadership of Desabandhu C. R. Das,

leadership. If the question could be raised to the level of an all-India political issue then there was some chance of success. The Sikh agitation which was then occupying the centre of the Indian political stage with the support of the Congress provided him with a model. It was with the idea of canvassing the support of the Congress for an agitation in favour of temple-entry that Madhavan undertook the journey to Kakinada. Being a realist, he knew well enough that a local leader from an Indian State would have but little chance of access to the all-India leaders. He thought that being the editor of a Congress daily it would be possible for me to take him to the leaders and to explain the importance of the cause to them. We decided to travel together to Kakinada and it was on this journey that we first worked out in conversation the programme of the Vaikom Satyagraha. Guruvayoor was the place originally suggested by Madhavan but I advised against that on two grounds; first that the strength of the Ezhavas was much greater in Travancore and secondly being a Princely State its government was less capable of meeting an organized agitation of the kind we contemplated. That is how the Vaikom Satyagraha which was to become an epic chapter in the social struggle of modern India came to be planned. Through my friendship with Maulana Mohammed Ali I was able to introduce Madhavan to the Congress leaders, all of whom promised him strong support.

The Kakinada Session was not one of the more important sessions of the Congress. Gandhiji was still in jail; the national leadership was divided and unable to provide the necessary guidance. Ideologically there was chaos in the party thinking, for though the rank and file and a group of 'Gandhian' leadership stood by the Mahatma's programme, the great ones of the provinces had practically come to the conclusion that the old programme could not be continued. The session was however made notable by the extraordinary presidential address of over a hundred printed pages in which Maulana Mohammed Ali with his usual brilliance of phraseology reviewed the position of Muslims in the national politics of

Motilal Nehru and Vittalbhai Patel which during their all-India tour visited Madras also. It was an event of more than ordinary significance and I was naturally brought into contact with the visiting leaders during their stay in the city. As the editor of an orthodox Congress paper they were anxious to brief me and I gathered from my conversations that the Committee considered its work mainly in the light of a post-mortem examination, and that with Gandhiji in jail it was likely to recommend the abandonment of the non-co-operation programme. Anyway their presence in Madras and prolonged discussions with them was a great experience which opened my eyes to many aspects of the national struggle.

The second event which also influenced me greatly was the Kakinada session of the Congress which met under the presidency of Maulana Mohammed Ali in December 1922. I travelled to Kakinanda in the company of T. K. Madhavan, the leader of the Ezhava community of Travancore, an ardent advocate of prohibition who had successfully organized his community to give up their hereditary profession of tapping toddy. Madhavan was a light-built man who appeared to be physically weak but one who was endowed with great moral courage. He combined a deep feeling for his community with a national outlook. A man of high character and scrupulous integrity he impressed me deeply at our very first meeting. On his way to Kakinada he called on me in Madras and desired me to put him in contact with Maulana Mohammed Ali and the other all-India leaders. His immediate object was to organize a major campaign in favour of the entry of all Hindu communities to the temples in Kerala. Of the excluded communities, the Ezhavas were the most advanced and dynamic, and the leadership had naturally to come from them. As the Travancore and Cochin governments and all the richer orthodox communities were adamant in their decision to maintain this exclusion which they wrongly considered to be a practice having the sanction of religion, Madhavan came to the conclusion that the only chance of success in agitation for so radical a reform lay in the support it received from all-India

leadership. If the question could be raised to the level of an all-India political issue then there was some chance of success. The Sikh agitation which was then occupying the centre of the Indian political stage with the support of the Congress provided him with a model. It was with the idea of canvassing the support of the Congress for an agitation in favour of temple-entry that Madhavan undertook the journey to Kakinada. Being a realist, he knew well enough that a local leader from an Indian State would have but little chance of access to the all-India leaders. He thought that being the editor of a Congress daily it would be possible for me to take him to the leaders and to explain the importance of the cause to them. We decided to travel together to Kakinada and it was on this journey that we first worked out in conversation the programme of the Vaikom Satyagraha. Guruvayoor was the place originally suggested by Madhavan but I advised against that on two grounds; first that the strength of the Ezhavas was much greater in Travancore and secondly being a Princely State its government was less capable of meeting an organized agitation of the kind we contemplated. That is how the Vaikom Satyagraha which was to become an epic chapter in the social struggle of modern India came to be planned. Through my friendship with Maulana Mohammed Ali I was able to introduce Madhavan to the Congress leaders, all of whom promised him strong support.

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India. It took over three hours to read and most of the delegates naturally found so long a performance extremely boring, apart also from the irrelevance of a great deal of what the speech contained. I was in close contact with Mohammed Ali all through that time and because of our previous contact at Aligarh he took very kindly to me and took me into confidence in many matters. I do not know whether this was out of friendship for me or for the sake of publicity.

Mohammed Ali presided over the subject committee with great skill, parrying unpleasant questions, scattering epigrams in wild profusion and generally maintaining a spirit of kindly humour during periods of bitter debate. He was particularly good at repartee and one such caused a great deal of misunderstanding long afterwards. During a debate someone had raised a point about the decision of the president being a violation of the constitution. But came the president's reply like a shot, 'Constitutions like virgins are meant to be violated.' I could figure the shock that the faces of the puritan Congress leaders registered. When I reported it in *Swarajya*, the press of northern India with the leaders of Allahabad in the van began to thunder in shocked protest.

Also in 1922 the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee organized a conference at Palghat at which Sarojini Naidu was invited to preside. As I was elected president of the literary conference attached to it, I travelled down to Palghat with Sarojini Naidu. That was my first meeting with this gracious lady whose wit, charm and eloquence had already captured the heart of India. We spent three days in each other's company in the house of my friend, K. P. Kesava Menon, the doyen of Kerala politics. Kesava Menon, a typical Kerala aristocrat was an ideal host, free, generous and informal, at the same time providing for every material comfort. His house situated near pleasant and green paddy fields with a view facing the Western Ghats was in the traditional Malabar style. Those three days of association with Sarojini Naidu laid the foundations of a friendship which was one of the mainstays of my life till her demise in 1949.

There is one other aspect of Madras life which stands out prominently in my mind. It is the exotic social and cultural salon over which Mrinalini Chattopadhyaya presided for some years. Madras as is well known is socially orthodox. There is very little mingling of sexes in society even though in women's education Madras is ahead of most provinces and there has never been any tradition of purdah or seclusion among the Hindus of the south. In this traditionally orthodox Hindu community, conservative in its ways and disapproving the social mixing of sexes, Mrinalini Chattopadhyaya and her sisters decided to set up home. Mrinalini was the younger sister of Sarojini Naidu. Educated at Cambridge where she had a brilliant record she returned to India on being offered the Vice-Principalship of Queen Mary's College for Women in Madras, a post for which she was eminently fitted. But on landing in Bombay she was held up by the police, interrogated and a letter which she was carrying from a revolutionary group in London for its friends in India was taken away from her. Her search created a sensation. Though she had come out on the promise of appointment it was clear that she could not now look forward to it. In fact she found all avenues of employment, official and non-official, closed to her. Nor could she take up her residence in the capital of the faithful ally of the British government, more royalist always than the King and anxious, especially in times of war, to prove his faithfulness to the British masters. Mrinalini Chattopadhyaya therefore took up her residence in a villa at San Thome in Madras.

Though Mrinalini Chattopadhyaya was no revolutionary herself, she had been associated with a revolutionary group in England. Her celebrated brother, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, was the recognized head of the Indian revolutionary movement in Europe at the time. That remarkable man whose life is a revolutionary drama had been associated with Savarkar, Dhingra and others in the terrorist organization which came to light with the murder of Lalkaka. He escaped to France in the nick of time and is said to have planned the sensational escape of Savarkar from board the ship at

Marseilles. In 1915 according to what he himself told me at a later time he was engaged in large-scale sabotage of industrial plants in Italy which were working in Allied interests. Whether it was through his influence or not Mrinalini was in close contact with a revolutionary group in London and carried for it a letter to India. This is what came to be known in Parliament as the Squire's Daughter's Case, as one of the people concerned was an English lady belonging to one of the county families in England.

Mrinalini Chattopadhyaya having been subjected to police attention found herself blocked everywhere and finally decided to edit a literary and artistic magazine entitled *Sh'ama* ('Light'). Her house in San Thome soon became the centre of a brilliant group. Apart from her own sisters, Sunalini and Suhasini, the Chattopadhyaya sisterhood, the group also included a number of young people of both sexes, the most distinguished of whom was a young Brahmin widow from Mangalore who was later to achieve national eminence as Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya. Both Sunalini and Suhasini shared in an ample measure the family charm and talents and were destined in later life to achieve distinction in different ways. The Chattopadhyaya brothers also contributed much to the success of the salon. Of these the most notable was Harindranath, the poet, dramatist and actor.

The elite of Madras was carried off its feet by this combination of charm, talent and wit. The villa at San Thome became the centre of a new life on whose outer margin appeared such leading lights as C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, C. R. Reddy, Prof Candeth and many others. This was before I arrived in Madras. By 1922 an odour of bohemianism had began to affect the prestige of the circle, and render it suspicious in the eyes of the Madras orthodoxy. A succession of romances caused a stir in Madras. The young and beautiful Konkani widow who was then a student at Queen Mary's College married Harindranath, the poet. Sunalini married A. S. Rajam, a brilliant young Iyengar Brahmin whom I had known and admired at college. He was one of the most promising

young men of his generation. The Brahmin society of Madras did not take kindly to this marriage. Rajam and his wife left for Allahabad where he secured a post on *The Pioneer*, where he caught tuberculosis and died a few years later while his wife discovered a career for herself in the then new and growing cinematographic art. Suhasini, her younger sister, married A. C. N. Nambiar, the brother of Prof Candeth who had been one of the early promoters of the salon. Soon after, Nambiar and his wife left for Berlin. The later career of this couple is one of the strangest stories of modern Indian history into which I cannot enter here. It may be briefly stated that Suhasini—no doubt under the influence of her brother Viren—became an enthusiastic communist and returned to India, while Nambiar after having been imprisoned by the Nazis as a suspect in the Reichstag Burning Case, became in turn the ambassador to Nazi Germany of Subhash Bose's national government, and after independence the government of India's representative with the Federal German government at Bonn.

These romances had already cast a shadow on the salon when I joined the *Swarajya*. But the circle was still functioning. As I had briefly known Mrinalini Chattopadhyaya in London and was in fact present on the historic occasion of the farewell party to her at the then new Lyons Corner House when the incriminating letter was said to have been handed over to her, I was made welcome at the villa and for a time became a member of the group. It was a strange experience. The circle slowly withered away but there is no question that the Chattopadhyaya salon was in its day a social and intellectual fact of some importance in the history of modern Madras.

Notes

1

1. The twelfth of the twenty-seven traditional star-sequences of the Hindu calendar.
2. Written by Mandavappalli Ittirarissa Menon (1745-1805).
3. *Life of Sri Krishna*, a poem in sanskritized Malayalam by Kunjan Nambiar (1705).
4. Orally recited satiric verse of which Kunjan Nambiar was a great master.
5. Sweet dish made of rice boiled with milk and sugar.

2

1. *The Peacock's Message*, a love poem in the *sandesa* tradition by Valia Koil Thampuran (1845-1915), written to his wife while he was in internment.
2. Valia Koil Thampuran's translation of Kalidasa's play was the first in Malayalam.
3. In the *akshara sloka* competition, the first syllable of the third line of the quatrain recited by one competitor is used to begin the verse to be recited by the next and so on. If the latter is unable to quote a suitable verse, the former must do it himself in order to win.
4. See no. 3 above. The reference is to a stanza in *Mayura Sandesam*.
5. *Song of Krishna*, a poem in old Malayalam, the opening lines of which are sung as a lullaby.
6. Novel by Valia Koil Thampuran published in 1894.
7. Perhaps the greatest Kathakali drama; written by Unnayi Warrier.

8. The first literary history of Malayalam, published in 1881.
9. Sanskrit hymn in praise of Devi worshipped as *Parasakti*; attributed to Sankara.
10. A poem in unsanskritized Malayalam by Kundur Narayana Menon (1860-1935).
11. A poem in the *chambu* form by Changanacherry Ravi Varma Koil Thampuran.
12. Fifteen-century *manipravala* epic.
13. *Giant of a Cowshed*, presumably about a bull.
14. *Giant of the Free Temple Dining-Hall.* A hit at the Brahmins who cadged free meals from temples.
15. No details are known of this work.

3

1. Style of writing in which Sanskrit and Malayalam are freely mixed.
2. Panikkar's first book, published in 1917.
3. Published in 1920.
4. Ancient Indian system of education where the pupils live with the teachers and help in household work.
5. First of two volumes in which Panikkar's early poems were collected. The title is a concession to modesty, as the work is remarkably mature.

4

1. A literary genre that combines both prose and verse.
2. Early poem in *manipravala* style.
3. Texts for narration of *Koothu* by Chakyars.
4. Amusing novel refuting the propaganda of Katherine Mayo's *Mother India*.

5., 6. & 7. Panikkar's Malayalam works, the last being a collection of short poems.

8., 9. & 10. Panikkar's English works of the period.
11. Movement for the restoration of the Khilafat, which broadened into pan-Islamism.
12. Kathakali drama by Kottayathu Thampuran (1665-1745).

5

1. Completion of sixty years, that is the sixty-first birthday.
2. The matrilineal system of inheritance among the Nair community of Kerala.

6

1. Marches in near-military formation by Sikh volunteers.
2. Continuous reading of the *Granth Saheb.*
3. *Panki's Wedding*, a burlesque poem describing the poets of Kerala as suitors in a *swayamvara.*

7

1. An important source-book for the early history of Kerala.

8

1. Published in 1929.
2. A pioneer work on the area.
3. Sequel to no. 1 above and published in 1931.
4. A book of topical interest at the time.

9

1. The first of Panikkar's books on the Indian States.
2. Sequel to no. 1 above.

11

1. Malayalam poem, predominantly erotic in content.
2. Malayalam poem in the *sandesa* tradition. The poet sends a message to his beloved in Kerala through a Bikaner prince.
3. A reflective poem by Panikkar.
4. A novel set in the Mogul court of Akbar, featuring a jeweller, Kalyana Mul.
5. Treatise on poetic theory in Malayalam.
6. Malayalam play.

7., 8., 9. & 10. Panikkar's books in English, arising from his experiences in the service of the princely States.

11. Sundaram Ayyar—Krishnaswamy Ayyar Lectures, 1933-4, University of Madras.
12. Work on political theory.
13. Malayalam play centred round the marriage of Ravana and Mandodari.
14. Malayalam play set in the times of the Guptas.
15. Historical novel on Marthanda Varma's expedition to the north.
16. Socio-historical novel of Malabar where a Nair embraces Christianity and becomes a Portuguese mercenary.
17. Historical novel based on the exploits of Pazhassi Kerala Varma.
18. See no. 2 above.
19. A narrative in the *chambu* style.

20., 21., 22. & 23. Panikkar's early writings.

12

1. During his early military career, Arthur Wellesley served in southern India.
2. Collector of Malabar; he wrote the *Malabar Manual* in 1887.
3. A poem in the *sandesa* style by Uddanda Sastri, an eminent scholar at the Court of the Zamorin.
4. Traditional four-line stanza praising the goddess of Purali, a mountain fortress in which Kerala Varma retreated when pressed by the British.

14

1. Twelfth-century Jain sage and grammarian and author of *Trishashti-salaka-purusa-carita* or *Lives of Sixty-three Great Persons.*
2. Religious poem about Krishna and Arjuna.
3. Poem in praise of the ruling ministers of Gurjara by Bala Chandra Suri.
4. A tenth-century poem in the *yamaka* style by Vasudeva.
5. First-century poet and philosopher, and author of *Buddha-carita.*
6. Well-known collection of stories by Somadeva.
7. Published on Independence Day, 1947.
8. & 9. See ch. 11, nos. 13 & 17.
10. Collection of one hundred and two *muktakas* or poetic nuggets similar to the Sanskrit *Amaruka-sataka.* Mostly erotic.
11. A romantic poem.
12. See ch. 11, no. 6.
13. Poems published in 1920.
14. An erotic poem by Vallathol.
15. A Malayalam translation of the Sanskrit poem by Amaruka of Kashmir.

16. See ch. 11, no. 19.
17. Ballads extolling the bravery of the Nairs and Thiyyas of north Kerala.
18. & 19. See ch. 8, nos. 1 & 3.
20. See ch. 11, no. 16.
21. See no. 11 above.
22. Panikkar's version of the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam.
23. A translation of the *Rubaiyat* by G. Sankara Kurup.

15

1. Fixation of land revenue by means of periodic settlements.
2. Author of the treatise, *Samgitaraja*.
3. Akbar's famous minister.
4. No details are known of this writer.

16

1. Secretary of State for India in the War Cabinet.
2. Historian and Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.

17

1. Laudatory hyperbole meaning 'Supreme Scholar of the *Vedas* and the *Vedanta*'.
2. 'Ideal Minister', another title conferred on C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar.

18

1. See ch. 11, no. 15.

19

1. 'Victory to Mother India'.
2. 'Victory to Hindu Dharma'.
3. 'Victory to Mahatma Gandhi'.
4. 'Peace, Peace, Peace'. Vedic chant which occurs in all Hindu ceremonies.

20

1. Twelfth-century work by Kalhana, being a chronicle of the princes of Kashmir.
2. *The Little Clay Cart*, a well-known Sanskrit play by King Sudraka.

21

1. Concentrated sweet made of wheat, sugar and ghee.
2. Sauce of dal, vegetables and spices.
3. Mulligatawny.
4. Bengali sweet made of milk and sugar.
5. Last month of the Malayalam calendar corresponding to July-August.

22

1. Published in 1945.
2. Published in 1946.
3. Mahratta naval commander who challenged the English navy in the early eighteenth century.

23

1. Mystical invocatory syllable with which Hindu prayers begin.
2. Sage among princes.
3. Abbreviation of *amir* (Arabic), meaning chief, commander or prince.
4. Legendary Brahmin warrior who defeated the Kshatriyas and reclaimed the land of Kerala from the ocean.

24

1. Full-moon day in the month of *Vaisakha*, the first month of the Hindu calendar, corresponding to April-May. It is traditionally an auspicious day in the Punjab.
2. Former capital of China, when the north was under Japanese occupation.

26

1. Third-century B.C. classic on the art of government by Kautilya.

27

1. 'Hail to the jewel in the lotus', a Buddhist chant.
2. Script of the Sanskrit language, now adopted for Hindi.
3. A selection of Panikkar's speeches on Indian affairs.

29

1. & 2. Works of Kunjikuttan Thampuran, a Malayalam poet noted for his quick facility of composition.
3. Mother Goddess of Kerala, that is, the Malayalam language personified.
4. A book on the future of India.

30

1. Published in 1955.
2. Memoirs of Harry S. Truman in two volumes published in 1958.
3. Published in 1955.
4. Date of publication not known.
5. *Asia and Western Dominance*, published in 1953.
6. Collection of eighteen short poems published in 1954.
7. No details are known of this work.

31

1. Published in 1952.
2. Religious teachers.
3. Traditional songs in praise of God.

32

1. A famous yogi.

34

1. See ch. 30, no. 5.

35

1. Erotic poems in Sanskrit by Govardhana, a poet of the twelfth-century.
2. Long jacket with buttoned neck worn in northern India.
3. Dated 25 February 1956.
4., 5. & 6. The four goals of life prescribed for Hindus are: *dharma* or right conduct; *artha* or wealth; *kama* or domestic happiness; and *moksha* or ultimate redemption of the soul.
7. Published in 1955.

36

1. Date of publication not known.

37

1. Literally the 'Victorious tenth'—the tenth day of Rama's battle with Ravana which marked his victory over the forces of evil. This auspicious day is traditionally favoured for launching new projects.
2. The third of the four stages of life ordered for the Hindu: *brahmacharya* or celibacy; *grihastha* or married life; *vanaprastha* or withdrawal to the forest; and *sanyasa* or total renunciation of wordly life.

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